Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha

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## Introduction

The elephant-headed deva (God) – Ganesh is lovingly worshipped and revered by millions of people worldwide. He is perhaps one of the most interesting deities in the Hindu pantheon. The son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesh, is the God of good luck and auspiciousness and is the dispeller of problems and obstacles -Vignahartha. He is the master of ceremonies and is the first to be revered and prayed to, whenever a puja is performed. He is believed to bring prosperity and initiate new beginnings. He is also worshipped as the God of wisdom, wealth, health, celibacy, fertility and happiness.

Although Ganesh the auspicious Lord of the Ganas is known through the Hindu religion, he transcends different religions and is loved by people from all walks of life. Ganesh is worshipped by both Vaishnavaites (devotees of Vishnu) and Saivites (devotees of Shiva). In the Panchayatana puja, Ganesh is glorified as one of the five prime Hindu deities (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti and Ganesha) whose worship confers immortality and liberation.

(Image source)

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**Ganesh Around the world**

Ganesh was not restricted to India alone. Some of the earliest images of Ganesh are found outside India. Faith in Ganesh transcends the boundaries of culture, language, and religion. He is a global traveller who has charted vast territories- from India to Tibet, China, Thailand, and Japan.

Lord Ganesh: the lord of beginnings and wisdom.
(Image source)

The earliest elephant-headed human figure appears on a plaque found in Luristan, in Western Iran dating back to between 1,200-1,000 BC.

According to legend, Emperor Asoka's daughter Charumati built a temple for Ganesh in Nepal, and the earliest surviving Ganesh in Nepal belongs to the 8th century. Ganesh occasionally found a place alongside Mahavir, in the major Svetambara branch of Jainism, as well as among Buddhists from Nepal and other countries.

The Ganesh cult expanded and travelled outside India to South-East Asia, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Tibet, China, Central Asia, Mongolia and Japan, with Hinduism and Buddhism in the Gupta period.

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In Tibet, Ganesh is placed above the entrance of Buddhist monasteries or painted on the doors, often holding a trident and is identified with Shiva. In Tibetan Buddhism, the practice associated with Ganesh, as Buddhist Tantric deity Maharakta, survives up to this day. The Tibetan Ganesh appears, besides bronzes, in the resplendent Thang-ka paintings alongside the serene Buddha. He is also regarded as a manifestation of the Avalokiteshwara.

A dancing Tibetan Ganesh. (Image source)

There are those who chant his glory. There are those who worship and adore him. There are those who seek his darshan(audience). There are those who tell stories about him. There are those who invoke and invite his bles ings. There are those who lovingly sing his praises. In Thailand, Ganesh is known as Phra Phikanet and is wor-shipped as the deity of good fortune. Here he is associated with arts, education and trade.

In Khotan or Chinese Turkestan, Ganesh was painted on wooden panels and bronze tablets. From Khotan, Ganesh reached China, and the earliest Chinese image of Ganesh is found at Kung-Hsien, a two-armed seated figure hold-ing a lotus dated to AD 531, and this image is described as the "Spirit King of Elephants".

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In Japan, he is worshipped as Kangiten or Binayaka-ten. Here he is offered radishes, wine, and fresh fruits and bliss buns made of curd, honey, and flour. Kangiten is a secret esoteric form of the deity. Kangiten symbolised the union of the individual with the universal spirit and consists of two Vinayakas embracing each other. Another form, Vajra Vinayaka or Kakuzencho, had three heads with three eyes, holding a sword, radish, sceptre and Modak. In Greece, Janus, the god in Greek mythology after whom the month of January was named, has the head of an elephant. Sometimes, he is depicted as a two-headed deity. Like Ganesh, Janus is worshipped at the beginning of any auspicious occasion.

Afghanistan was once a land of Hinduism and Buddhism; there is evidence of Ganesh images, and statutes in their semi-destroyed state now in this country.

Marble Maha Vinayaka (today partly destroyed)

In Sri Lanka, the oldest image of Ganesh is found in the Kantak Chaitya in Mihintale dating to the 1st century BC. The Ganesh idol at Subrahmanyam temple in Katargama town is still worshipped. People from all religions other than Hinduism also visit this temple, for this Ganesh is believed to grant the wishes of his devotees.

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Ganesh is a vibrant presence whose benediction is sought by traders, travellers, artists and statesmen. As lord of business and diplomacy, he sits on a high pedestal outside Bangkok's World Trade Centre, where people offer flowers, incense and a reverential Sawasdee.

Even Muslim Indonesia reveres him and European scholars call him the 'Indonesian God of Wisdom'. The image of Jalan Ganesa, of Bandung, adorns the 20,000 rupiah notes. The Indonesian Government's 20,000 rupiah note also has Lord Ganesh's picture. According to the Finance Minister of Indonesia, - The biggest Islamic Nation- the reason for putting Ganesh's picture is to "remove all obstacles from the financial development of the State, whose economy during the last ten years has suffered many crises."

There is evidence of Ganesh's worship in Latin America and Europe also.

In India, Ganesh is invoked at the very beginning of a multitude of occasions, in everyday prayer, before entering into a new home, before inaugurating an office, building or shop, before starting a journey, a business venture, before taking an examination, in invitations for weddings, before starting auspicious ceremonies like marriage, thread ceremony and other various occasions.

Fear of the unknown is the most basic of human emotions that affects all, irrespective of country or religion. Ganesh helps one to cope with fear and anxiety; hence he is present in different cultures; guiding people through ambivalence, and bringing clarity and a fresh perspective.

**Who is Ganesh?**

(Image source)

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Apart from stirring the devotee's soul, Ganesh has seeped into our cultural conscience completely. The devotees worship, and the thinkers think. There are those who represent him in art and literature. Anthropologists, artists, historians, indologists, linguists, philosophers, sociologists, musicians, dancers, filmmakers and devotees of Ganesh all have been exploring this question and have been answering it in their own way. It is in this quest, the creative outpourings of this enormously popular deity that have brought in numerous products covering almost all aspects of our lives. The physical, spiritual and mythological representation of Ganesh offers more iconographic variations than does that of any other Indian deity. Ganesh embodies enormous popularity that transcends sectarian and territorial limits.

It is in answer to this question that the following pages are addressed. A brief exploration of Ganesh's significance, his representations, and his omnipresence in the multiple media is what will be presented in the following pages.

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## Ganesha - Reverence

"In sacred places of worship, stones of little value are shaped as Divine forms or idols. But when the feeling of devotion transmutes the idol, it becomes the highest treasure for the human mind." Satya Sai Baba.

(Image source)

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**Reverence in Public**
**Ganesh Festival**

Ganesh Chaturthi (also known as Vinayaka Chaturthi) is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Ganesh throughout India by all Hindus as a huge festival. It is celebrated on the fourth day of the bright fortnight of Bhadrapada month of the Hindu calendar. It is among the most celebrated festivals in India, and perhaps the only one involving the general public (others only involve families and friends and are celebrated privately).

The significance of celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi is to get free from worldly attachments with discrimination and to vanquish the ego by surrendering to the Lord Ganesha who promises protection and also to attain the bliss of spiritual enlightenment.

Lord Ganesha the elephant-headed god is believed to be a God of power and wisdom. This festival was not celebrated with public participation until the time of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the famous Indian freedom fighter. Ganesh Chaturthi was an important festival during the Peshwa rule in Maharashtra but acquired a more organized form during the Indian Swaraj movement. Lokamanya Tilak visualized the cultural importance of Ganesha and brought in the practice of Ganesha Chaturthi as a community celebration. He brought Ganesha into the heart of every Maharashtrian as a part of the socio-cultural movement and used it as a great means to unite Hindus all over India to fight for freedom from colonisation.

This is one of the main festivals that are celebrated joyfully by large groups of people, in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Different sizes of beautifully decorated idols of Lord Ganesh are created by specially skilled artisans in these states and are sold for this festival. The idols are usually made of clay or plaster of paris.

Ganesh idols are being made with the help of moulds.

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The moulded Ganesha idols are being painted.

Finishing touches are applied to a large painted Ganesha idol.

Enormous amounts of funds are collected and innovative ways are devised each year to create memorable Ganesh mandaps (temporary structures). This public festival apart from having just religious quality brings together all castes and communities who work with great fervour and enthusiasm in organizing it.

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Painted Ganesh idols for sale before Ganesh Chaturthi.

Reverential prayers being offered to Ganesha installed in a pandal in Mumbai during Ganesh Chaturthi .

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A famous pandal of Ganesha- also known as Lalbaugcha Raja in Lower Parel, Mumbai. This is one of the most famous Ganesha idols in Mumbai during Ganesha Chaturthi. It is believed that one's wishes get fulfilled when one prays to God here, so every year millions of people come and visit.

Ganesh Chaturthi starts with the installation of these Ganesh idols amidst, gaiety in the uniquely decorated mandaps. There is also a spirit of competitiveness in organising the best mandap. The festivities last for the next ten days.

Apart from the daily worship, this is also the time for cultural activities like public performances of music and dance, etc. On the final day of the celebrations, the Ganesh idols are taken through the streets in processions accompanied with dancing, singing, and fanfare. This ritual is known as Ganesh Visarjan. The festivities end when the idols of the year both small and large are immersed in water (Visarjan), accompanied by loud shouts of "Ganapati Bappa Morya, Pudhachya Varshi Laukar ya" (Marathi) especially in Mumbai, meaning- "O lord Ganesha, come again early next year".The word Morya refers to Moreshwar, one of the main Ganesh temples In Maharashtra, where Ganesha is associated with a Mor or a peacock. Thus when people call out to Ganesha to come again early next year, they are perhaps hoping for the return of the monsoons which heralds the dance of the peacock and also brings prosperity to the region.

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**A few images of Ganesh Visarjan in Mumbai**

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In today's practice, the Ganesha festival is enjoyed by all, Hindus and non-Hindus alike, as He is the first God to be worshipped.

Other than Ganesha Chaturthi, Ganesha Jayanti is celebrated on the fourth day of the waxing moon in the month of Magh. The fourth day of the waxing moon is called Vinayaki Chaturthi. The fourth day of the waning moon is called Sankashti Chaturthi. Ganesha is also worshipped on these days to avert problems and disasters. Apart from these, days, Pancha Ganesha festival is celebrated in the USA by Hindus which was spearheaded by the Himalayan Academy to promote Hinduism amongst the children of the Indian community.

No other state in India dotes on Lord Ganesha like Maharashtra. Every year the whole state reverberates with rhythm and music in praise of the Lord for ten days, starting with Ganesha Chaturthi and culminating in a grand, pompous immersion ceremony on Ananta Chaturdashi day.

Despite the intrusion of modern tastes and living habits among the younger generations, the deep roots of the Ganesha worship continue here and appear to stay for eternity.

**Ganesha in Maharashtra**
Ashtavinayak temples in Maharashtra:

The most important of the Ashtavinayaka temples is the Moreshwar temple at Morgaon. The sanctum sanctorum houses Mayureshvara -Peacock Lord, a primordial Ganesha idol with a left-sided trunk, fully smeared with saffron and protected by the hood of a cobra.

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This next temple is the Siddhivinayak temple at Siddhatek. The idol of Ganesha here is right-tusked and known as Siddhivinayak – Masterful remover. Devotees are enjoined to be extra careful about the rituals and austerity while worshipping a right-tusked Ganesha.

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-reverence**

The temple to visit next is that of Ballareshwar at Pali. The name comes from Ganesha saving a boy named Ballala who spent all his time praying to him. Angered by the boy's obsessive behaviour, the villagers beat him up mercilessly, and it was Lord Ganesha who intervened to save his life. There are two Ganesha temples here. One has to first visit Shri Dhundivinayaka, the idol that Ballala worshipped, before proceeding to visit Shri Ballaleshvara in the main temple.

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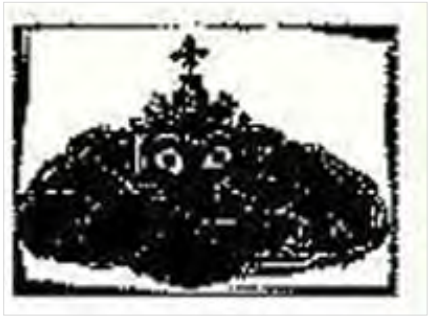
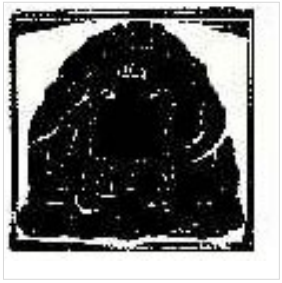


The next in the Ashtavinayak temples is the Varadavinayak temple at Mahad. Many devotees place their heads right at the feet of the idol to seek the blessings of Varada Vinayaka - Lord of Boons. An interesting feature of this temple is an Anantadipa (eternal flame) that has been kept alight since 1892.

The temple to visit next is that of Chintamani at Theur. Lord Ganesha here is known as Chintamani - the jewel of consciousness.



This next temple is that of Girijatmaj at Lenyadhri. The name indicates a cave in a mountain. Ganesha as Shri Girijatmaja means – mountain born. This temple is atop a hill accessible after climbing 283 steps and is a single large room about 57 feet long and 51 feet wide, cut into the rock with no supporting pillars anywhere.

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The next in the Ashtavinayak temples is that of Vighnahar at Ojhar. This temple is just off the Pune-Nasik highway and houses Shri Vighneshvara - Lord of Obstacles, flanked by Buddhi and Siddhi, as his consorts are popularly known in Maharashtra.

The last in the list of the Ashtavinayaka shrines is the temple of Mahaganapathi- Great Lord of Hosts at Ranjangaon. This is located on the highway connecting Pune and Ahmednagar. Here too Ganesha is flanked by Buddhi and Siddhi on his either side.

The source of the images of the Ashtavinayakas presented below at the eight temples is (Website source)

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The actual idols at the Ashtavinayak temples are presented below.

(Image source)

In addition to the famous Ashtavinayaka temples, Maharashtra boasts a bounty of Ganesha temples in every nook and corner some famous, others not so.

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The more important ones include Shri Siddhi Vinayaka temple of Mumbai, shown below.

(Image source)

The idol of Ganesha in Shri Siddhi Vinayaka temple of Mumbai. (Image source)

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Prayers being offered by devotees at a Ganesha temple (Image source)

The other well-known temples are Shri Maha Ganapati temple (famous as a matrimonial matchmaker) at Titwala, close to Mumbai, Shri Mangala Murti temple at Chinchwad, a suburb of Pune, Shri Kasva Ganapati and Shri Sarasbag Ganapati temples, both of Pune city. On the Arabian Sea coast, just off Ratnagiri, Ganapatipule houses a temple that is washed by the waves of the sea every day. This is a major attraction for tourists and devotees. Other well-known ones are Dasabhuja Ganapati temple near Chiplun on the coastal belt, Siddhi Vinayaka temple at Nandgaon, Vighnayana Ganapati temple at Rakshasabhuvan in Marathwada, Modakeshvara temple at Nasik and Shri Ganapati temple at Seetabardi, Nagpur. There is a belief that pilgrims who visit all the above-mentioned temples during a single Tirthayatra (spiritual outing), would gain the ultimate blessings of the Lord Ganesha.

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# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

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In some temples, the Ganesha idol is installed at the entrance to the central sanctum, in the south, and also at the Southwestern corner in the first court, of every Siva temple.

One of the many forms of Ganesha is found in every Hindu temple and also every Hindu village and community has a temple of the Lord Ganesha.

Some of the Ganesha temples are often quite humble, like a simple roadside shrines. These in fact outnumber the huge and ornate temples. Their large numbers confirm that Ganesha worship is indeed a deeply ingrained Indian, mostly South Indian habit. These are usually tiny spaces created under a roadside tree, at road turnings, outside residences, along highways, in tiny corners of parks, in the most unexpected of public places. These are viewed in passing and a salutation is offered from the heart.

A few examples of these Ganesha shrines are shown below.

A Ganesha shrine at a street corner.

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A Ganesha shrine amidst shops on the busy main road.

A close-up of the Ganesha idol from the shrine is shown in the previous image. He is revered by the passersby.

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Ganesha shrine in a park. (Image source)

Like in Maharashtra, there are significant Ganesha temples all over the country visited by the believers, as Ganesha worship is considered to be most effective in illuminating the consciousness, and hence he is sought after and propitiated.

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**Kanipakkam Ganesha Temple:**
Like Maharashtra this is one of the among the popular pilgrimage centres of Andhra Pradesh. This is located close to Tirupati. This is also known as Vara Siddhi Vinayaka Temple, Kanipakkam. The significance of this temple is the presence of a 'Swayambhu' idol (naturally manifested) of Lord Ganesha, inside a small well. The idol was found here many years back and local people claim that the idol is growing in size every year. Also during the monsoons water overflows from this well. The temple was built by Chola King in the 11th Century.

(Images source)

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**Rockfort Ucchi Pillayar Temple:**
This is one of the oldest temples in India; dating back to the 10th century AD. This temple is located in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. It is perched atop one of the oldest rocks in the world, 3 billion years old and 83m high. Ganesha in this temple is known as Pillaiyar. This temple was first patronized by the Pallavas and later by the Nayaks of Madurai during the Vijayanagar era. The British during the Carnatic wars fortified the temple giving it the name Rockfort temple.

(Images source)

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(Image source)

Some of the popular Ganesha temples in other parts of India are:
- Sri Sri Sri Sidha Binayak Pitha, Berhampur, Ganjam, Orissa, India (www.sidhibinayakpitha.org)
- Girijatmaja Vinayak Temple, Pune, Maharashtra
- Ranthambore Temple, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan
- Ganesh Tok Temple, Gangtok, Sikkim
- Ganapathi Temple Idagunji,Karnataka
- Ganapathi Temple in Kottarakkara, Kerala
- Ganapathi Temple, Malliyur, Kottayam, Kerala

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- Sree MahaGanapathy Temple, Panniyali, Omalloor, Pathanamthitta, Kerala
- Maha Ganapathi Temple, Ganapathivattam, Sulthan Batheri, Wayanad, Kerala
- Maha Ganapathi Temple, Pampa, Kerala
- Iswaramangalam Ganapathi Temple, Kerala
- Edappally Ganapathy temple, Kochi, Kerala
- Velam Ganapathi temple, Mayyil, Kannur, Kerala
- Madhur Maha Ganapathi Temple, Kasaragod, Kerala
- Suryakalady Maha Ganapathi Temple, Nattassery, Kottayam, Kerala
- Ganapathi Temple, Pazhavangadi, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
- Ganapathi Temple, Vazhappally Mahadevar Temple Complex, Changanassery, Kerala
- Sree Vinayaka Mandir, Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi, (Siddhi Buddhi Sametha Karpaka Vinayakar)
- Karunya Mahaganapathi Temple, Mayur Vihar Phase II, Delhi
- GDP Temples, Shimoga, Karnataka
- Chintaman Ganesh Temple, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India
- Chintamani Temple, Pune, Maharashtra
- Ganapati Temple, Pernankila, Karnataka
- Anegudde Sri Vinayaka Temple, Anegudde, Udupi district, Karnataka
- Idagunji Devasthana Temple, Idagunji, Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka
- Ganapatipule Ganapati Temple, Ganapatipule, district of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra
- Tekadicha Ganapati Temple, Nagpur, Maharashtra
- Karpaka Vinayakar Temple, Pillayarpatti (near Madurai), Tamil Nadu, - where Lord Ganesha is worshipped in his Swayambu Form. He is known as Karpaga Vinayagar.
- Sharavu Mahaganapathy Temple, Mangalore, Karnataka
- Velam Mahaganapathi Temple, Mayyil, Kerala
- Dodda Ganesha Temple, Basavanagudi (near Bangalore), Karnataka
- Shri Sunder Vinayak, Pratishthanam (near Bangalore), Karnataka
- Shri Vijaya Ganapati Temple, Ullagaram (near Chennai) Tamil Nadu, – Vijaya Ganapati means "The victorious Ganesha".
- Madhur Mahaganapathi Temple near the town of Kasaragod, in Kasaragod district, Kerala
- Pazhavangadi Mahaganapathi Temple, Thiruvananthapuram city, Kerala.
- Sri Maha Ganapathi Temple, Sapthagiri Colony, Vedayapalem, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, (www.Vignesha.com).

A website that lists many of Lord Ganesha's temples in the other states of India:
(website source)

Design Resource

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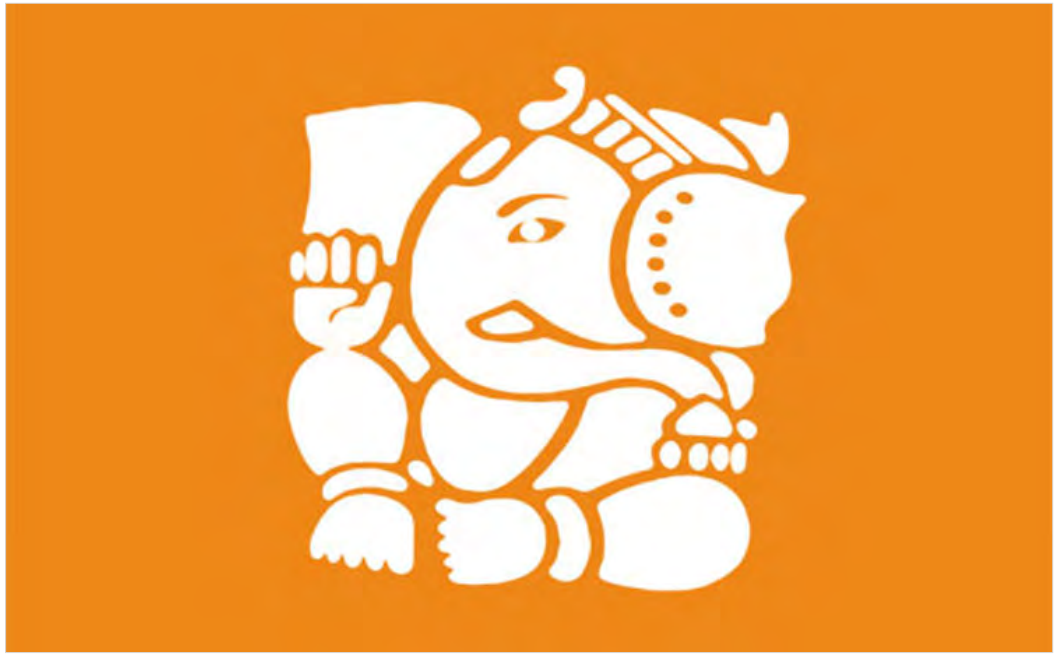
Lord Ganesha is also worshipped on almost every continent in this world. He is worshipped in temples and home shrines in the present day in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Java, Bali, Borneo, Tibet, Myanmar, Siam, Afghanistan, the Middle East, China, Indo-China, Japan, the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, Africa, Mauritius, Reunion, Europe, Australia, Canada, South America, the United States and elsewhere.

He is one of the most revered gods in the Hindu pantheon.

**Personal Worship**



Ganesha is called Mangal Murti or the embodiment of auspiciousness. Mangal means auspiciousness and also means the planet Mars, or Mangal Graha the planet of aggressiveness. This is also why Ganesha rituals are performed on Tuesday – the weekday associated with Mars.

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The all-pervading Ganesh, also known as Gajanana has countless temples all over India and is worshipped with more affection than awe in every Hindu home. There are more temples, roadside and home shrines dedicated to Lord Ganesha than to any other god in the Hindu pantheon.

A sacred shrine at home functions as an extension of the temple and most Hindu families worship Lord Ganesha in their homes through the traditional ceremony known as puja. An idol made of metal or stone or a framed picture of the Lord Ganesha is placed in the shrine and offered worship. Pujas can be as simple as lighting a lamp and offering a flower at the Lord's holy feet; or they can be elaborate and detailed, with many chants and offerings. The indispensable part of any puja is devotion. It is believed that by performing puja daily at home, divine energies are invoked and the home becomes a sacred sanctuary.

The puja is performed along with the offering of fresh flowers especially Erukku (botanical name-Calotropis) flowers as these are considered a favourite of Lord Ganesha. Sometimes Erukku flowers are stringed together and placed round the crown and neck of Ganesha. Along with this flower, the common hariali grass (Durva in Sanskrit and botanically known as Cynodon dactylon) blades are also considered another favourite of Lord Ganesha. Blades of this are made into a wreath and placed on the shoulders of Ganesha during worship.

Preparation is an integral part of worship. Before performing the puja, preparation is of utmost importance -- gathering flowers, cleaning the idols, shrine and puja tray, getting the oil lamps ready and preparing the fruit and/or cooked food offerings. It is common to chant the 108 or 1,008 holy names of Ganesha or to softly sing devotional songs while performing these tasks. This process quiets the mind of the devotees and brings their awareness to close Lord Ganesh.

A few examples of home altars/shrines with Ganesha idols or images are presented below.

(Image source)

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(Image source)

Apart from the home altars, people believe in having portable shrines of Lord Ganesha. These are like stickers, or visiting card-sized Ganesha pictures carried in wallets, in pockets. People also always have a tiny idol or picture frame of Ganesha in their car dashboards, sometimes along with other deities too.

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Car dashboard Ganesha shrines

(Image source)

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Almost all vehicles, public or private – autorickshaws, cars, taxis, buses, and trucks have either a Ganesha idol or a painted picture on the dashboard area or even the name -("Mangal Murti", "Om Ganeshaya Namaha", "Jai Ganesh" etc) painted in front of the driver's controls.
The hood of an autorickshaw meter resembles Ganesha's face and ears. Some of them are accentuated by painting them orange- a colour strongly associated with Ganesha.

(Image source)

(Image source)

These examples of devotion only confirm the supreme belief Hindus have in this grand Lord Ganesh, as a talisman who they believe will guide their travel, be with them always and constantly protect them.

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## Ganesha Symbology

**The story of Ganesha's origin:**
The beloved elephant-faced deity popularly known as Ganesh (or Ganesha) has intrigued thinking men all over the world, all through the ages even unto the present day. The sacred texts give a variety of stories narrating the sequence of Ganesh's birth, the most popular being the one mentioning that Ganesh was created by Goddess Parvati, which goes like this:

Goddess Parvati wanted a child, though Lord Shiva was not keen on being a father. She wanted a child who would help all creatures realize God. So she decided to create one on her own. She applied a mixture of turmeric and oil on her body, and when this soaked her sweat and dried off, she scraped it off her skin and from this paste created the figure of a young boy. She infused life into the figure and told him that he was her son Vinayaka (a child created without - Vina, the help of a man - Nayaka). She ordered him to guard the entrance of the cave and not to let anyone in while she bathed.

The young boy Vinayaka followed her orders and did not let anyone in including Lord Shiva. Unaware of the origins of the boy, an infuriated Lord Shiva fought with him and severed his head. Goddess Parvati, while returning from her bath, saw her headless son and was inconsolable with grief and threatened to destroy the heavens and the earth. Lord Shiva pacified her and instructed his followers (known as Ganas) to bring the head of the first living being they laid their eyes on. The first creature they encountered was an elephant, so they cut off its head and brought it to Lord Shiva who placed it on the young boy's headless body and breathed life into him. Lord Shiva gave him the name Ganesha. The word Ganesha is made up of Gana (followers of Shiva) and Isha (the Lord), thus Shiva appointed him the "lord of his Ganas". Thus even without realizing it, Lord Shiva became a father to Ganesha.

The above story is more or less familiar to most people in India and followers of Hinduism. The visual depiction of this story and the divine family has been done by various artists in their own styles, with their own beliefs and perceptions since ancient times in a number of different ways and mediums. A few of these present-day images, statues, and wall hangings are presented below which introduce one to some of these styles, colours and formats of the visual renderings.

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**Illustrations of Shiva, Parvati, and Ganesha**

Shiva, Parvati, and Ganesha.

(Image source)

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(Image source)

A plastic moulded idol of Shiva, Parvati, and Ganesha. (Image source)

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A Jamini Roy wall hanging of Shiva, Parvati, and Ganesha. (Image source)

A Kalighat painting of Shiva, Parvati, and Ganesha. (Image source)

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**Ganesh Symbolism:**
The portrayal of Lord Ganesha as one having a human body with an elephant head symbolizes the ideals of perfection as conceived by Hindu sages. Various profound philosophical concepts have been attributed to each part of Ganesha's majestic figure by believers.

The image of Ganesha presented below depicts the significance and importance of each part of God.

An understanding of what man gleans from each part of Ganesha is briefly presented below.

**The elephant head:** The elephant head is the symbol of material reality. It represents prosperity and power. The big head of an elephant also symbolizes wisdom, understanding, and a discriminating intellect that one must possess to attain perfection in life. There is also the belief that Ganesha's head symbolizes the Atman or the soul, which is the ultimate supreme reality of human existence.

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**The human body:** There is the belief that Ganesha's human body signifies Maya or the earthly existence of human beings. Lord Shiva by creating a boy who is half human and half animal draws the attention of the devotee to their animal as well as the human side. The fundamental difference between humans and animals is the intellectual capacity. Ganesha's body draws the attention of the humans to this so they can outgrow their animal needs and fears, and evolve to realize their true potential.

**The small mouth:** The small mouth of Ganesha indicates that one must spend less time talking and utilize one's energies for thinking or doing.

**Large ears:** Ganesha's large ears signify that a perfect person is one who possesses a great capacity to listen to others and assimilate ideas.

**The trunk:** Ganesha has an elephant's trunk which symbolizes a large operating range in terms of functionality. It has the dexterity to uproot a tree and also lift a needle off the ground with equal ease. Likewise, it signifies that the human mind must be adaptable and efficient. It must be strong enough to face the ups and downs of the external world and also be perceptive enough to explore the subtle realms of the inner world. The mouse sitting near the feet of Ganesha: Ganesha is called Vakratunda, one whose trunk is turned to one side, either left or right. When the trunk points to the left it is closer to the heart and it indicates worldly form of Ganesha; this is the form that is kept inside the house. When the trunk points to the right it is away from the heart and it indicates a more ascetic form of Ganesha; this is usually kept outside the house, in temples.

**The two tusks with the left tusk broken:** The two tusks denote the two aspects of the human personality, wisdom and emotion. The right tusk represents wisdom and the left tusk represents emotion. The broken left tusk conveys the idea that one must always retain the good and throw away the bad. It is believed that the broken tusk served as a stylus which enabled Ganesha to write the epic Mahabharata for Sage Vyasa. The side with one tusk represents the spiritual reality and the side with the broken tusk represents the material reality.

**Small eyes:** The small eyes of Ganesha signify that one must have single-minded concentration and focus on anything one does.

**The four arms:** The four arms indicate that the Ganesha is omnipresent and omnipotent. The left side of the body symbolizes emotion and the right side symbolizes reason.

**The axe and the noose:** Ganesha holds an axe in the upper left hand and a noose in the upper right hand. The axe signifies that, in order to attain spiritual perfection, one should cut worldly attachments and conquer emotions. It is also a symbol of analysis or disintegration.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-symbology

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**The lotus:** Ganesha is often seen holding a lotus in his hand. The lotus signifies that one must live in the world without being affected by earthly temptations, just as a lotus, though growing in water remains unaffected by it.

**The goad:** Sometimes Ganesha is seen holding an elephant goad or Ankusha. This is a reminder that within all of us is animal power waiting to be encouraged and the same needs to be restrained too, that is, there needs to be a balance in life to achieve happiness. There is also the belief that the goad Ganesha propels mankind forward towards the eternal path and removes obstacles that come in the way.

**The Modak:** It is believed that Ganesha is very fond of this sweet steamed dumpling called the "Modak". It is made of rice flour dough that is shaped like a small bag which contains a mixture of jaggery, coconut and sesame seeds. The shape of the Modak resembles a bag of money which is a symbol of wealth. It is believed that the Modak is shaped like an upward-pointing triangle which in Tantric art represents spiritual reality. Thus the Modak has the aesthetics of material reality but the geometry of spiritual reality.

**The Prasad:** The Prasad near the feet of Ganesha denotes that the whole world is at his feet and that he bestows wealth and prosperity upon his devotees. A variety of fruits associated with wealth and prosperity are offered to Ganesha as Prasad too; such as banana, coconut, sugar cane, wood apple, and rose apple.

**Blessings:** The lower right hand is shown in a blessing pose, which signifies that Ganesha always blesses his devotees.

**The large stomach:** The large stomach signifies that a perfect individual must have a large capacity to face all pleasant and unpleasant experiences of the world. In material terms, Ganesha's large stomach indicates success with the least effort and also affluence. A snake is seen wrapped around Ganesha's stomach which symbolizes retention and regeneration.

**The mouse sitting near the feet of Ganesha:** The mouse is the vehicle of Ganesha. In South India, it is believed that the mouse was once a demon that was defeated and domesticated by Ganesha. The mouse symbolizes the ego- a problem that can eat away all that is good in a person. Ganesha is the provider of solutions and helps in conquering the ego, so wisdom can shine forth in anyone.

**Ganesha's clothes:** There is a symbolism associated with the colours used for Ganesha's clothes. Ganesha is usually portrayed wearing red and yellow clothes. Yellow symbolizes purity, peace and truthfulness. This also indicates the qualities a perfect person must possess to perform all duties well in this world. The red colour that Ganesha is associated with represents Shakti, indicating that he is fiery and energetic. The colour red represents material reality in Hinduism.

It is an entirely different matter that the Ganesh idols that are commercially produced nowadays for the festival Ganesh Chaturthi or for other purposes come in various forms, postures adorned in multiple colours and accessories. There is a visible creative explosion in terms of exploration of this beloved God that will be discussed elsewhere in this resource in detail.

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**Source:**
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## Aesthetic Exploration (2D)

**Traditional Forms of Ganesha – (Forms in 2D)**
Ganesha, the Lord of beginnings, is present everywhere; in our culture, in the physical universe and within our hearts, and acts as a guiding force. His presence can be equally felt in the consecrated temple or a roadside shrine, from which his grace radiates. It is believed that Ganesha's being is so vast that he cannot be contained by any single concept, and therefore He is portrayed in many forms. He is each of them, and He is all of them.

Through the centuries Ganesha has been known not just by one name but by numerous ones. Each of these names was interpreted as a different form. Some of these traditional forms that are indicated in the sacred Hindu texts are a record of the initial belief system. These are in a way the very foundation for the evolution of the aesthetic exploration of the Ganesha forms. Ganesh is a primordial God whose form has evolved and transformed over space and time, and this is very visible in all dimensions and mediums in this modern day.

The multiple traditional representations of Ganesha's form, with evolving aesthetics, are what are briefly presented in this form exploration.

Like Lord Vishnu's 10 avatars, Ganesha Purana indicates four avatars of Ganesha, each in one of the four yugas. These forms were taken to slay the demons while riding a lion, a peacock, a rat, or a horse in each yuga.

* He is described as Vighneshvara, the Lord of Obstacles. Ganesha is so called as he can create difficulties and obstructions if the time is wrong for one to proceed and remove the same obstacles when success is assured. It is to this form of Ganesha -Vighneshvara that one bows down before undertaking any task.

* He is described as Ekadanta, the Single-Tusked One. Ganesha is the Patron of Literature. He undertook to scribe the great epic, Mahabharata, dictated to Him by sage Vyasa. The lesson he offers here is that knowledge and dharma are of utmost importance in one's life.

* He is described as Siddhidata, the Giver of Success. Ganesha is associated with bountiful harvests and abundance in life. Ganesha is believed to be the material manifestation of the manas, or mind, of Lord Siva, and he embodies the five elements -- earth, air, fire, water and ether -- and guides the elemental forces that produce and maintain order in the universe.

**The Eight Avatars of Ganesha:**
The "Mudgala Purana" (an ancient text on Lord Ganesha) cites eight forms of Ganesha, to destroy eight demons each representing human weaknesses.

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1. Ekadanta means God with one tusk. He conquers Mada, the demon of vanity while riding the rat.

2. Dhumravarna means smoke coloured God. He conquers Ahamkara, the demon of arrogance while riding a rat.

3. Vakratunda means God with a curved trunk. Ganesha vanquishes Matsarya, the demon of jealousy while riding the lion.

4. Mahodara means God with a big belly. Ganesha is Lord of Moha, the demon of attachment while riding a rat.

5. Gajanana means God with an elephant face. Ganesha conquers Lobha, the demon of greed while riding a rat.

6. Lambodara means God with a corpulent belly. Ganesha vanquishes Krodha, the demon of anger or rage while riding a rat.

7. Vikata means God with a deformed body. Ganesha overpowers Kama the God of lust while riding a peacock.

8. Vighnaraja means the King of Obstacles. Ganesha conquers Mama, the demon of self; indulgence.

**Sixteen divine forms of Ganesha - Shodasha Ganesha**

Lord Ganesha is also depicted in 16 different forms namely--Bala, Taruna, Bhakta, Veera, Shakti, Dwija, Siddhi, Ucchishta, Vighna, Kshipra, Herambha, Lakshmi, Maha, Vijaya, Nritta and Urddhva Ganapatis.

These 16 forms were later logically associated with the various lunar days ( Tithi) starting from Amavasya (New Moon day). On the new moon day, the Bala Ganesha (Child Ganesha) was propitiated, the next day, when the moon is seen as a very thin crescent, he is called Taruna Ganesha, and so on.

There is also a hymn called Ganapati Shodasa Nama Stotram in the 24th Prakarana of Upasana Khanda of Ganesh Purana. This hymn praises the 16 names of Lord Ganesh.

**Thirty-two Forms of Ganesha:**
A comprehensive list of all the images of the Hindu Gods worshipped was created by the court scholars of the King of Mysore of the Wodeyar dynasty in the 19th century in Karnataka. The Maharaja was a great patron of art and learning. This compilation is known as Sri-Tattva-Nidhi. This is written in Kannada. The first page of the Sri-Tattva-Nidhi attributes authorship of the work to the Maharaja himself.

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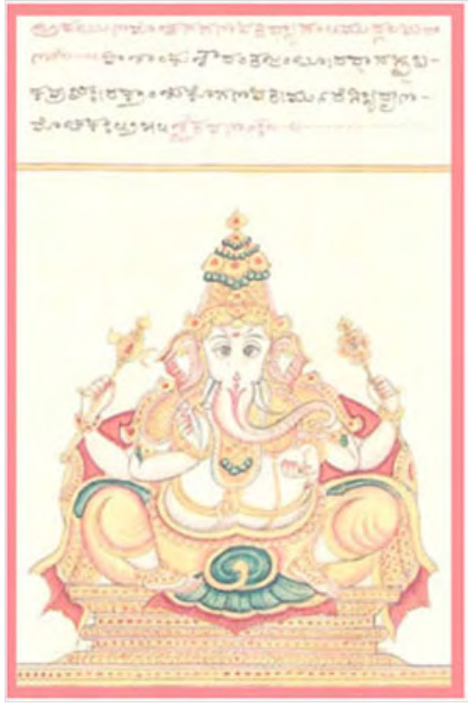
The Maharaja funded an effort to put together in one work all available information concerning the iconography of divine figures in South India. He asked that a vast treatise be written, which he then had miniaturists from his palace to illustrate it. This describes the several forms of Shiva, Vishnu, Skanda, Ganesha, different goddesses, the nine planets (Navagraha), and the eight protectors of the cardinal points. This work is in nine parts, 1. Shakti Nidhi, 2.Vishnu Nidhi, 3.Shiva Nidhi, 4.Brahma Nidhi, 5.Graha Nidhi, 6.Vaishnava Nidhi, 7.Shaiva Nidhi, 8.Agama Nidhi. Each is called a Nidhi or a treasure.

There is a mention of the 32 forms of Ganesha in this compilation with relevant images. These images are the ones that the artisans found being worshipped in the various temples and households in the kingdom.

A few of them in the original format are shown below.



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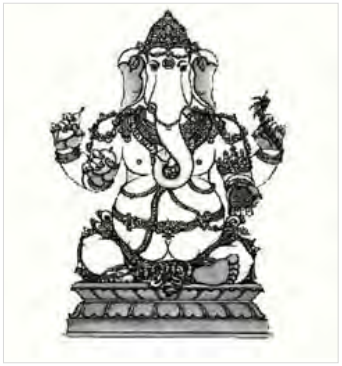
The 32 forms of Ganesha as indicated in the Sri-Tattva-Nidhi are represented below.

**1. Baal Ganapati:**
Baal Ganapati is "the childlike" Ganesha of golden hue. He holds a banana, mango, sugar cane and jackfruit in his hands, all representing the earth's abundance and fertility. In his trunk is the Modaka his favourite sweet.



**2. Taruna Ganapati:**
Taruna Ganapati is the eight-armed, youthful Ganesha. He is in a brilliant red colour that reflects the blossoming of youth. He holds a noose and goad, Modaka, wood apple, rose apple, his broken tusk, a sprig of paddy and a sugar cane stalk in his eight arms.

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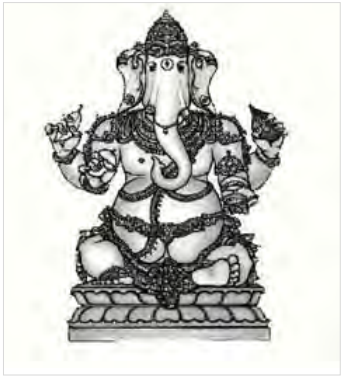
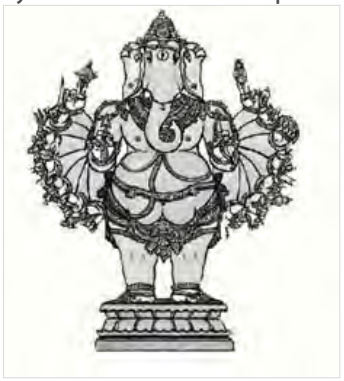
**3. Bhakti Ganapati:**
Bhakti Ganapati means the devotion worthy of Ganesha. He is dear to the devotees, is pleasant to look upon, like the shining full moon during harvest season and is garlanded with flowers. He holds a banana, a mango, coconut and a bowl of sweet payasam (milk pudding) in his hands.



**4. Vira Ganapati:**
Vira Ganapati means the valiant warrior. Ganesha assumes a commanding pose in this form. His 16 arms hold weapons: a goad, discus, bow, arrow, sword, shield, spear, mace, battleaxe, trident and more. This indicates the symbols of the mind's powers.



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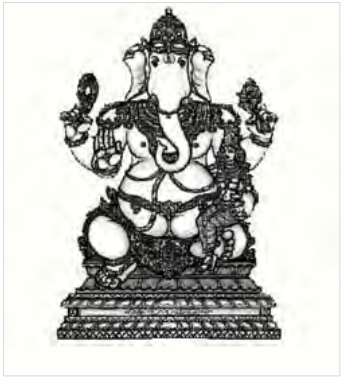
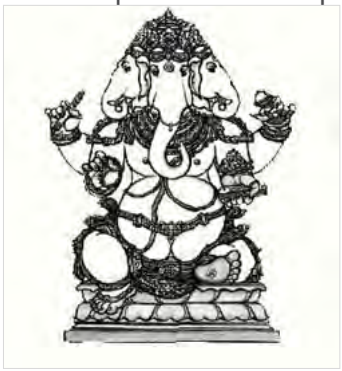
**5. Shakti Ganapati:**
Shakti Ganapati is the powerful Ganesha with his strength seated in the female form on his left lap. He is of orange-red hue and guards the householder. He has his four arms and holds a garland, noose and goad, and bestows blessings with the Abhaya mudra.



**6. Dvija Ganapati:**
Dvija Ganapati means twice-born or student Ganesha. He is moon-like in colour. He is four-headed, holding a noose, a goad, an ola leaf scripture, a staff, a water vessel and his Japa beads. In this form, he reminds one and all of the importance of disciplined striving.



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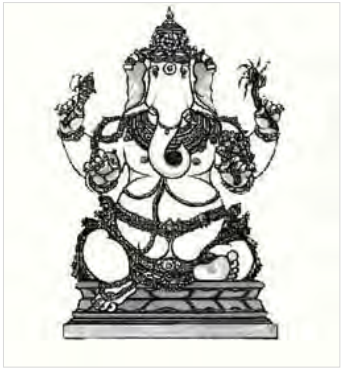
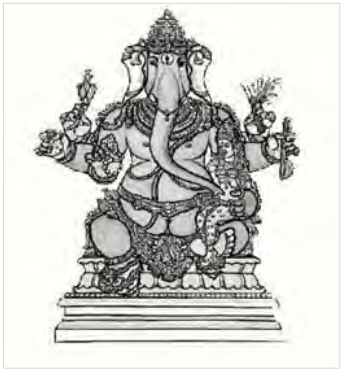
**7. Siddhi Ganapati:**
Siddhi Ganapati means the accomplished Ganesha. He is golden-yellow in colour and is the epitome of achievement and self-mastery. In this form he sits in a comfortable posture, holding a bouquet of flowers, an axe, mango, sugar cane and, in his trunk, a sesame sweet.



**8.Ucchhishta Ganapati:**
Ucchhishta Ganapati is the Ganesha who accepts offerings and is also the guardian of culture. He is six-armed and of blue complexion. He sits with his Shakti, holding a veena, a pomegranate, a blue lotus flower, Japa mala and a sprig of fresh paddy in his hands.



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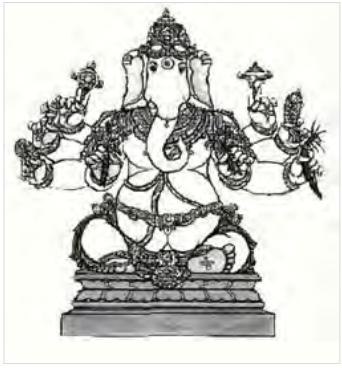
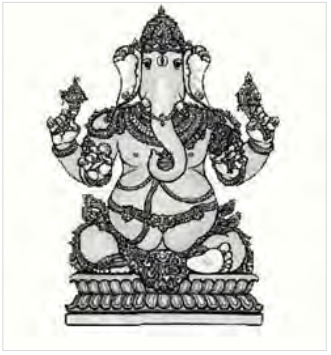
**9. Vighna Ganapati:**
Vighna Ganapati means the obstacle removing Ganesha. In this form, he is of a brilliant gold hue and bedecked with jewels. His eight arms hold a noose and goad, tusk and Modaka, conch and discus, a bouquet of flowers, sugar cane, flower arrow and an axe.



**10. Kshipra Ganapati:**
Kshipra Ganapati means the quick-acting Ganesha. He is red-hued, and handsome in this form. He is also the giver of boons and displays his broken tusk, a noose, a goad and a sprig of the kalpavriksha (wish-fulfilling) tree. In his trunk, he holds a small pot of precious jewels.



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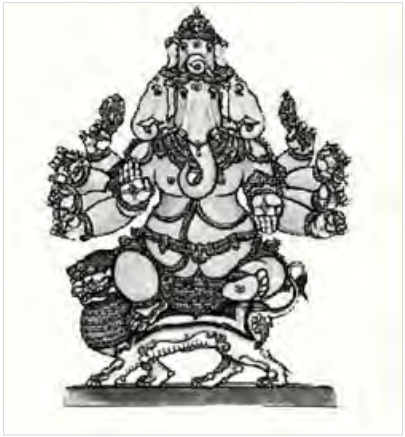
**11. Heramba Ganapati:**
Heramba Ganapati means a fierce Ganesha and a protector of the weak. Ganesha in this form is five-faced and white in colour. He rides a big lion. In his hands, he holds a noose, Japa beads, an axe, hammer, tusk, garland, fruit and Modaka and they also indicate protection and blessings to devotees by gestures.



**12. Lakshmi Ganapati:**
Lakshmi Ganapati means Ganesha with the goddess of wealth. He is pure white in colour and a giver of success, and achievement. His hands gesture the Varada mudra, while in the rest he holds a green parrot, a pomegranate, a sword, a goad, a noose, sprig of the kalpavriksha and a water vessel.

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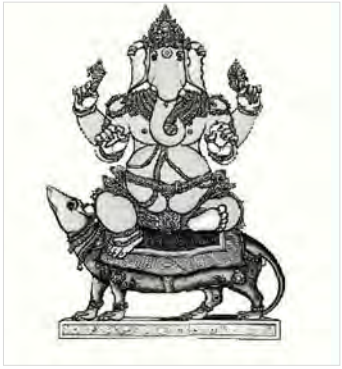
**13. Maha Ganapati:**
Maha Ganapati means the great Ganesha. He is accompanied by one of his shaktis and is red-complexioned and possesses three eyes. In his hands, he holds his broken tusk, a pomegranate, blue lily, sugar-cane bow, discus, noose, lotus, paddy sprig, mace and a pot of gems.

**14. Vijaya Ganapati:**
Vijaya Ganapati means the victorious Ganesha and a bestower of success. In this form, he is four-armed and red-hued and riding the rat or the Mushika. In his arms, he holds the broken tusk, an elephant goad, a noose and a golden mango.



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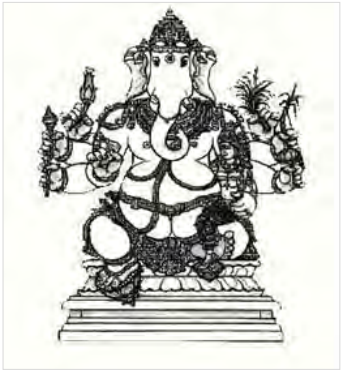
**15. Nritya Ganapati:**
Nritya Ganapati means the dancing Ganesha. He is four-armed and golden in colour, with rings on His fingers, holding a tusk, goad, noose and the Modaka sweet. He dances under the Kalpavriksha tree, in exuberance and joy.

**16. Urdhva Ganapati:**
Urdhva Ganapati means the restrained Ganesha. He is of a golden hue in this form and in his six hands he holds a sprig of paddy, a lotus, the sugar cane bow, an arrow, his ivory tusk and a blue water lily.



Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/aesthetic-exploration-2d

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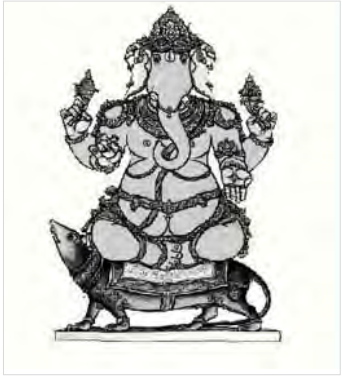
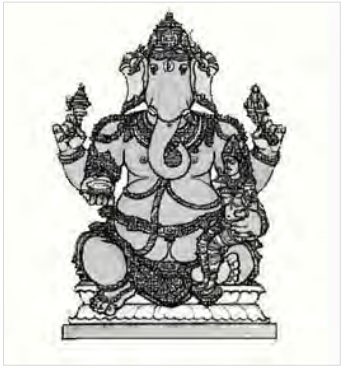
**17. Ekakshara Ganapati:**
Ekakshara Ganapathi means Ganesha of the single syllable (gam). He is of red complexion and has a crescent moon on his crown. He sits in the lotus pose upon Mushika, or the rat and holds a pomegranate, noose and goad in his hands. His hands also indicate the boon-giving gesture.



**18. Varada Ganapati:**
Varada Ganapati means the boon bestowing Ganesha. In this form, the prominent third eye of wisdom is visible on the forehead. His shakti is at his side, and a crescent moon adorns his crown. He holds a dish of honey, the noose, and goad in his hands and encloses a pot of jewels in his trunk.



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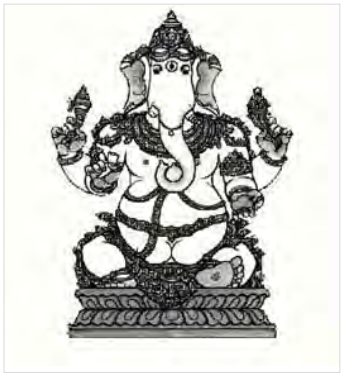
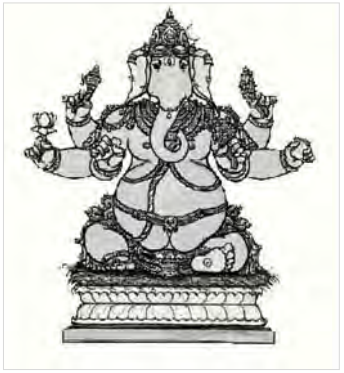
**19. Tryakshara Ganapati:**
Tryakshara Ganapati means the three-syllable (A-U-M) Ganesha. He is gold in colour and has fly whisks in His big ears. He carries the broken tusk, goad, noose and mango in his hands. In his trunk, he holds a sweet Modaka.



**20. Kshipraprasaada Ganapati:**
Kshipraprasaada Ganapati means the quick rewarding Ganesha. He is seated on a Kusha-grass throne. His big belly symbolizes the manifest universe. In his hands, he holds a noose, goad, tusk, lotus, pomegranate and a twig of the wish-fulfilling tree in this form.



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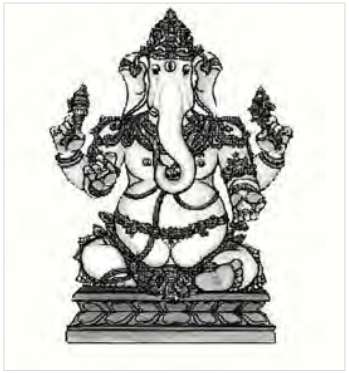
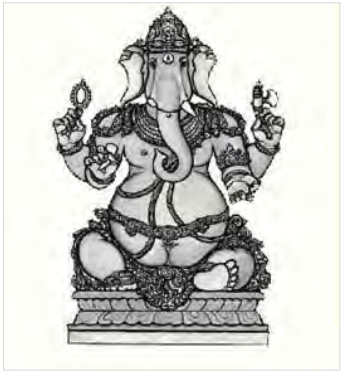
**21. Haridra Ganapati:**
Haridra Ganapati means the golden Ganesha. In this form, he is dressed in bright yellow vestments. He wields a noose to hold devotees close and a sharp goad to spur them onward.



**22. Ekadanta Ganapati:**
Ekadanta Ganapathi means Ganesha of a single tusk. In this form, he is distinguished by his blue colour and size-able belly. He holds in his hands in this form an axe for cutting the bonds of ignorance, prayer beads for Japa, a laddu sweet and the broken right tusk.



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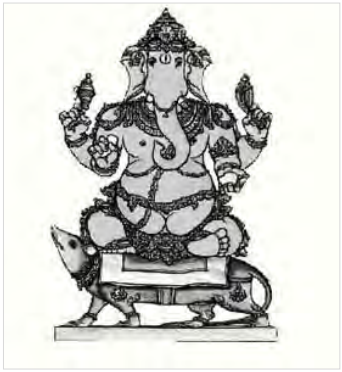
**23. Srishti Ganapati:**
Srishti Ganapati means the cosmic Ganesha. He is of red complexion in this form and holds a noose a goad, a mango, and his tusk, in his hands. He is also shown riding on his docile and friendly mouse.



**24. Uddanda Ganapati:**
Uddanda Ganapati means Ganesha as the enforcer of Dharma or the disciplinarian. In this form, his ten hands hold a pot of gems, a blue lily, sugar cane, a mace, a lotus flower, a sprig of paddy, a pomegranate, a noose, a garland and His broken tusk.

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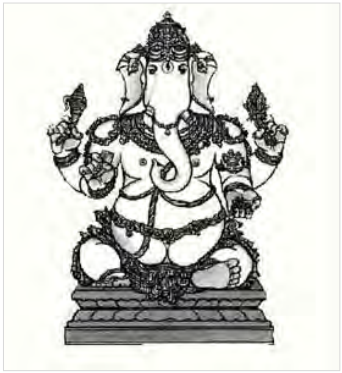
**25. Rinamochana Ganapati:**
Rinamochana Ganapati means the debt redeeming Ganesha. He is humanity's liberator from bondage and guilt. He bears a noose and a goad, his milk-white tusk and a favourite fruit, the rose apple in his hands.



**26. Dhundi Ganapati:**
Dhundi Ganapati, means the sought-after or the desired Ganesha. He holds a strand of the sacred rudraksha beads, his broken tusk, an axe and a small pot of precious gems thought to represent the treasury of awakenings in his hands in this form. He is red-hued in this form.

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**27. Dvimukha Ganapati:**
Dvimukha Ganapati means the two-headed Ganesha. This form is also called Janus by the Romans, with two divergent faces, and sees in all directions. His blue-green form is dressed in red silk. He wears a bejewelled crown and holds a noose, goad, his tusk and a pot of gems in his hands.

**28. Trimukha Ganapati:**
Trimukha Ganapati means the three-headed Ganesha. He gestures protection with his right hand and blessings with his left. In this form, he is of red hue, and sits on a golden lotus, holding his beads, a noose, goad and vessel of nectar in his hands.

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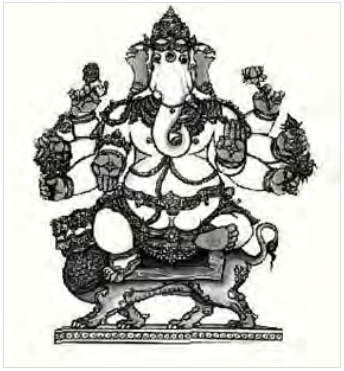
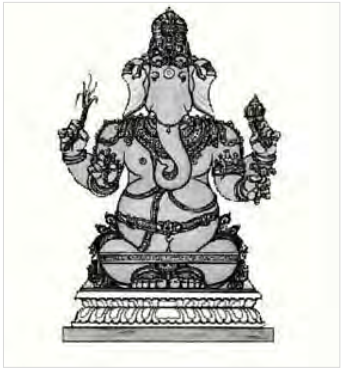
**29. Simha Ganapati:**
Simha Ganapati means lion riding Ganesha. In this form he is white in colour, rides a lion, symbolizing strength and fearlessness. He also holds a kalpavriksha sprig, a veena, a lotus blossom, a flower bouquet and a pot of jewels in his hands.



**30. Yoga Ganapati:**
Yoga Ganapati means Ganesha as a yogi. His knees are strapped in a meditative pose, and he is absorbed in mantra Japa. In this form, his hands hold a yoga staff, a sugar cane stalk, a noose and prayer beads. Blue garments adorn his form which is like the colour of the morning sun.



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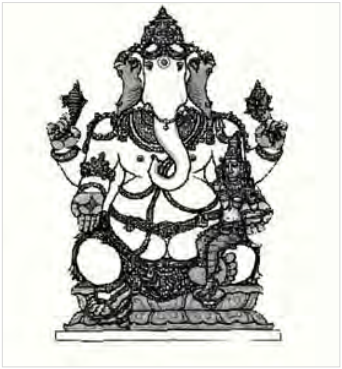
**31. Durga Ganapati:**
Durga Ganapati means the invincible Ganesha. He waves the flag of victory over darkness. In this form he is of a deep gold hue, dressed in red, holding a bow and arrow, noose, goad, prayer beads, broken tusk and a rose apple in his hands.

**32. Sankatahara Ganapati:**
Sankatahara Ganapati means Ganesha as the dispeller of sorrow. In this form, he is the problem solver of the devotees. He is dressed in blue, and seated on a red lotus flower. He holds a bowl of pudding, a goad and a noose in his hands while gesturing the boon-granting Varada mudra too.



The Ganesha's distinctive features - his stomach, his arms and what he holds in them, his elephant-shaped head, his body colours, his tusks, and the Vahana or vehicle he sometimes rode are an integral part of his form. But it is the variations of these elements and his postures that lead to the creation of different graphical illustrations presented in the above 32 different forms.

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Ganesha's belly is one of the most important elements in his form that is responsible for his identity. Because of his large belly, he is called Lambodara (literally means potbelly), and Mahodara (great belly). His belly is supposed to hold the past, present, and future or the entire universe. The number of Ganesha's arms varies and his best-known forms have between two and sixteen arms. Many depictions of Ganesha feature four arms, which are mentioned in Puranic sources and codified as a standard form in some iconographic texts. The serpent is a common feature in Ganesha iconography and appears in many forms-wrapped around his stomach as a belt, as a Yagnopavita or the sacred thread, held in his hand, coiled at the ankles or as a throne.

Ganesha's forehead too carries symbols like the Tilaka consisting of three horizontal lines or along with a crescent moon, or the third eye, as iconographic elements in different forms.

Many examples of colour associations with specific meditation forms of Ganesha are described in the Sri-Tattva-Nidhi. For example, white is associated with his representations as Heramba Ganapati and Rina Mochana Ganapati or Ekadanta Ganapati is visualized as blue during meditation in that form.

The Vahanas or the vehicles used by Ganesha as indicated in the Mudgala Purana are a mouse (shrew), a lion, a peacock and Shesha, the divine serpent. The four incarnations of Ganesha listed in the Ganesha Purana, Mohotkata in the Krita Yuga has a lion, Mayuresvara in the Treta Yuga has a peacock, Gajanana in the Dvapara Yuga has a mouse and Dhumraketu in the Kali Yuga has a horse. Jain depictions of Ganesha too, show his Vahana variously as a mouse, elephant, tortoise, ram, or peacock.

Ganesha is often shown riding on or attended by a mouse, or a rat. The names Musikavahana (mouse-mount) and Akhuketana (rat-banner) appear in the Ganesha Sahasranama. The mouse is interpreted in several ways- as a symbol of tamoguna as well as desire, or it symbolizes those who wish to overcome desires and be less selfish, or that the rat, a type of Vighna (impediment) needed to be overcome and subdued as a destructive pest. Ganesha as master of the rat demonstrates his function as Vigneshvara (Lord of Obstacles) and like the rat, he is considered capable of penetrating the most secret places.

Thai artist Mr. Choosak Vissanukamron has created a book that carries coloured paintings of the 32 forms of Ganesha. This book is in the Thai language. This indicates an example of the modern-day presentation of a traditional concept. This can be accessed at the following link
(Book source)

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**Traditional symbolic representations of Ganesha :**

**Pillaiyar Suzhi:**

Interestingly Ganesha is known as 'Pillaiyar' in Tamil Nadu, and he is symbolized by the "Pillaiyar Suzhi" . This is written first before writing anything on paper. This basically comprises of a part of a circle curving into a straight line, with two lines beneath it and a dot below all this. This is a very simple symbol to represent Ganesha. Before starting anything new, (especially students) draw this symbol at the beginning of their answer papers, in the hope to do well in their exams. This symbol is similar to the practice of writing "Shri" before starting anything in North India. By the use of these symbols of Ganesha, the belief is that one is ensuring the absence of obstacles in the activity leading to successful completion.

Pillayar Suzhi

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"Shri"

A "Shri" styled to represent Ganesha

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**Ganesha Yantra:**
Yantra is a geometrical representation of the Hindu God. Different deities have different yantras. Yantras consist of geometric shapes - circles, squares, triangles, and dots known as Bindus. The circles represent nature, the squares represent culture, downward pointing triangles refer to material reality and the upward pointing triangle and dots refer to the spiritual reality in the Yantra principle.

Ganesha Yantra (Image source)

All Yantras are usually contained in a square with four T-shaped gates( this means a Bhupura or the worldly realm) A circle is inscribed inside this square and is followed by 8 lotus petals emerging from another smaller circle within. Within this are the patterns which differ for each God.

In the Ganesha yantra, the final inner circle contains
• an upward pointing triangle
• a downward pointing triangle, and an upward pointing triangle placed in a way to create a six-pointed star
• a dot or a Bindu

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The geometrical forms in the Ganesha Yantra indicate that this is more related to spiritual reality than material reality. This indicates that Ganesha is a householder God with leanings towards asceticism.

These Yantras are available printed on paper or as paintings or also as embossed patterns on thin copper sheets. The Ganesh Yantra in any of these forms is framed and placed in appropriate places at homes, offices, business establishments, or temples.

Ganesha Yantra embossed on a copper sheet. (Image source)

The Ganesha Yantra is believed to be a sacred energy device that radiates positive energy which infuses within one the power to focus and successfully accomplish all goals.

Ganesha is given the foremost privilege in all the divine rituals of being invoked first. The belief is that fervent prayers to his Yantra will bring about positive reverberations into one's life and living space. The use of such Yantras is recommended when one is planning to undertake a new business venture or is stepping into a new phase of life. The Ganesh Yantra would help to curb all the impediments that could block the way and also to ward off negative influences and achieve success.

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There are some guidelines for using these Yantras. As it is believed to be a cosmic conductor of energy, it is recommended that it be placed on an altar or shrine facing the East or the North. Like how the Hindus perform puja after the daily bath the Yantra too is to be worshipped with flowers, sandalwood paste and also offering a lighted lamp or a lighted incense stick. The eyes and mind are to then focus at the centre of the Yantra and chant a Ganesh mantra like "Om Gam Ganapathaye Namaha" for say 108 times to achieve higher levels of consciousness.

Ganesh Yantras are also available as pendants, in copper, silver, gold, ceramic, or wood to be worn on a person. These are popular because of their significance and the strong belief that people have in Lord Ganesha.

(Image source)

(Image source)

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Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/aesthetic-exploration-3d-part-1

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## Aesthetic Exploration (3D) Part 1

**Aesthetic Exploration of Ganesha part I (Forms in 3D)**

**Traditional Temples and Idols**
The god of new beginnings, Ganesha is worshipped at the start of any undertaking. To this day in India, he is invoked, for example, by students commencing an exam, women starting to make a new batch of sweets, and accountants opening the books for a new year. Ganesha is carried at the head of all festival processions, even before the chief deity of that particular festival; thus every temple possesses at least one Ganesha figure.

To understand more about Ganesha idols, which originated in temples, it makes perfect sense to delve a bit into these temples, especially South Indian architectural marvels. The heritage value of these temples is priceless and most of our present day creative understanding of Ganesha's forms definitely starts here.

**Significance of temples:**
The worship of Gods in temples is a very ancient practice in India. Many believe that three great pillars that have held Hinduism high, millennium after millennium are the satgurus, the scriptures and the temples.

Temples are believed to be the abodes for Gods. Idols of Shiva, Vishnu, Parvati, Lakshmi, Kartikeya and Ganesha were placed inside these for worship. The South Indian temples have a special place in Indian history as their style of temple architecture is very distinct from that of the rest of India.

The types of architecture of these temples can be divided into four periods corresponding to the principal kingdoms which ruled in southern India down the centuries. The magnificent temples commissioned by the rulers were marvels of architecture with perfectly carved sculptures and idols of deities.

They are:

**Pallava (AD 600-900)**
The rock- cut of temples at Mahabalipuram are the greatest accomplishments of Pallava architecture. Another example is the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram which is a huge temple complex with a towered sanctuary and mandapa (a columned hall preceding the sanctuary).

**Chola (900-1150)**
The Cholas – perhaps Peninsular India's most powerful dynasty – came to power in the late 9th century A.D. and until the late 13th century, ruled most parts of peninsular India and even parts of Indonesia's Java island.

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Chola architecture achieved its peak at Thanjavur, the capital established by the Chola ruler Rajaraja-I. Bronze sculptures of this era are the finest in southern India. These are delicately modelled, especially those depicting Lord Shiva in his many aspects.

Chola rulers are known more for what they built rather than their conquests. During their rule poetry, theatre, music and dance flourished as arts. The magnificent temples commissioned by them were marvels of architecture with perfectly carved sculptures and idols of deities. With their rule, bronze-casting became a huge art in South India. One of the finest ones of all time, a masterpiece - the idol of Lord Nataraja or dancing Shiva in the Chidambaram temple was created in this era.

**Hoysala (1100-1350)**
The temples erected during the Hoysala kings have complicated plans with numerous angled projections. The temples from the Hoysala period can still be seen at Belur, Halebid and Sringeri. After the reign of the Hoysalas, architectural traditions were interrupted by Muslim raids at the end of the 13th century and temple building resumed later under the Vijayanagara Empire.

**Vijayanagara (1350-1565)**
By the 16th century, Vijayanagara Empire was one of the largest, with almost all of southern India being a part of it. The characteristic feature of this period was the development of the temple complexes which had a concentric series of rectangular enclosure walls with gopuras (towered gateways) in the middle of each side. Of the numerous Vijayanagara complexes in southern India, the most magnificent are those in Kerala on the west coast which developed a distinct style of architecture, during the same time. The temples here were roofed with sloping tiers of metal or Terra cotta tiles to protect them from heavy rainfall. A superb example of this is the Vadakkunatha temple at Trichur, which dates from the 12th century. Temples constructed later are found at Chengannur, Kaviyum and Vaikom.

**Agamas:** The temple architecture during these various periods followed the ancient Agamas (collection of sacred ritual practices).

These are books, and records of temple architecture and carry all information related to building one. Each Agama consists of four parts. The third part specifies rules for the construction of temples and for sculpting and carving the figures of deities for worship in the temples. In the Agamas for Silpa (the art of sculpture) elaborate rules are laid out, describing the quality requirements of the places where temples are to be built, the kind of images to be installed, the materials from which they are to be made, their dimensions, proportions, air circulation, lighting in the temple complex etc.

Apart from the aspects of temple construction, details regarding the exact manner of consecrating deities and worshipping them are laid out. They also describe every possible detail of handling icons and conserving them.

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These books are also the source of Vastu Shastra, the science which has gained immense popularity today.

**Some examples of temples with monolithic stone Ganeshas in India:**
Sometimes instead of housing the sacred stone Ganeshas in temples, some were carved on large boulders of granite creating monolithic, open air, outdoor Ganesha shrines.

The ancient town Melukote in Karnataka has unique monolith Ganesha idols. While one is located at the foot of Melukote hill, the other idol is at Kunthibetta in the Pandavapura taluk. This monolithic sculpture is said to be carved out around 1140 A.D.

(Image source)

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The idol is said to be sculpted during the construction of the Melukote Chelluvanarayana Swamy temple at the direction of the rulers of Mysore.

The monolithic Ganesha at the foot of the hill is offered pooja once in a year. The ritual is observed on Ganesh Chaturthi day in the month of 'Bhadrapada' once in a year. The devotees offer Mahabhisheka for the monolith Ganesha on the day.

Kunthibetta, a place close by also hosts a 15 feet monolith idol of Ganesha. According to folk tales, Pandava during their exile after losing in dice game to Kauravas offered pooja to this idol.

Kunthibetta is a favourite for trekkers and adventure buffs, and before starting their expedition many offer prayers to this Ganesha idol for a safe adventure.

While some of the ancient stone Ganeshas around the country receive their due reverence and worship some are in a sad state of neglect. One such example is at Mahabubnagar, Andhra Pradesh. An ancient Ganesha idol sculpted on a large granite boulder is lying in a state of neglect since centuries in the district. Believed to be carved out around 1140 A.D. by a king of western Chalukya dynasty, the idol is located in an agricultural field at Avancha village of Thimmajipet Mandal in the district.

The granite Ganesha reflects simplicity and grandeur, and truly has an ambience that is spiritual, but neither the Department of Archaeology nor the district administration has initiated measures to protect the 'rock Ganesha' by according to its heritage status.

(Image source)

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**Idols in temples:**
Along with stone idols, bronze and other metal idols were made in Tamil Nadu mostly during the Chola and Pallava eras of history between the 6th and 11th century A.D. The Pallava dynasty built temples across the verdant landscape of Tamil Nadu, but these were small and their spires rose to heights of 20 to 60 ft. Thus, the idols of Shiva, Vishnu, Parvati, Lakshmi, Kartikeya and Ganesha were the popular idols of that era and were small, but in consonance with the rules of the Agamas.

The Cholas were empire builders; they built huge temple complexes and their idols were also proportionately larger and more perfectly designed.

Many of these bronzes big or small have exquisite facial expressions. The ornamentation, the grace of posture, the proportions of limbs and the spiritual significance of these bronzes are incomparable.

The temples usually have two kinds of idols. Those which are fixed permanently in the sanctum and the sub-shrines are called Achala Bimba or immovable reflections of divinity. Each temple also requires transportable idols for worship or festive processions. These are called Chala Bimbas, or moveable reflections of divinity. The latter is used in festive rituals and processions.

From History, one learns about dynasties like the great Cholas who indulged in gifting bronze images of Gods and Goddesses to temples. This was done because it was believed that the wealth of kings had to be matched by equally impressive gestures of grand devotion to the Almighty. The processional deity (Utsava Murthi or the Chala Bimba), was adorned with royal jewels, and silks, bedecked by flowers and carried in palanquins or elaborate wooden chariots. They were also heralded by trumpets and drums and were taken in processions quite often winding their way around the imposing temples, as a show of pomp and glory.

Such temple festivals with processions, conducted with great pomp and splendour are conducted even to this day based on these age-old traditions.

**Bronze casting:**
Bronzes and other metal icons of the Chola era were either cast hollow or were solid. These were sculpted by master craftsmen (Sthapathi) who had already mastered the art of stone sculpting. A new craft was thus born the process of casting bronze images.

Traditional craftsmen in Swamimalai, Kumbakonam and other temple towns where the studios are located follow this procedure to date.

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Procedure: A wax model of the figure is chiselled by hand as detailed in drawings. The figure is then covered by a mould of clay. Once the clay has dried, red hot molten metal is poured into a hole in the mould. As the metal displaces the wax which pours out of another hole, it solidifies into the shape of the figure. After hours of cooling, the clay mould is broken open to reveal the rough metal image. Details and ornamentation are now worked on the metal figure before the final polish.

Till date, Tamil Nadu is dotted with innumerable temples which have bronze images worshipped according to the ancient Agamas. Some of these idols are one-of-a-kind. They are breathtaking in style, and significance. They radiate an intense and sacred aura.

Panchaloha idols: Some of the temples also had idols made of Panchaloha, which is a mix of five alloys - brass, gold, copper, silver and zinc. These five also represent the five elements which symbolically sanctify the cosmic core of sacred images. When melted in the right proportion it forms a shining metal, used for making sacred statues or sculptures.

**Idols as "objets d'art":**
The art of making bronzes reached its zenith during the Chola era between the 10th and 11th centuries. Later dynasties too followed the custom of commissioning images for worship.

Apart from the sacred purpose of worship over the years, these have reached the status of unique art creations and have attracted art connoisseurs from all over the world. In fact, it is this perception of being sacred art, that some of these idols have found their way into the vaults of private collectors.

A few examples are shown below:

1. Bronze Ganesha – (Chola period, ca. 1070) - From the Cleveland Museum of Art

(Image source)

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This sculpture displays powerful modelling and depicts Ganesha with his characteristic gentle paunch. He holds his typical attributes - the two rear hands hold a battle-axe and a noose or rosary, and the two front hands hold his own tusk (broken in a victorious battle against a mighty demon) and Modaka (sweet). Ganesha's love of sweets is proverbial, and sculptors frequently indicate this by having his trunk touching the sweets.

2. Ganesha, India, Uttar Pradesh; 8th century

(Image source)

This is a Ganesha in sandstone from the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller's 3rd Collection of Asian Art. This is a sculpture of a ten-armed Ganesha. Six of his ten hands perform gestures commonly used in dance. The other four hold a rosary, a snake, a bowl of sweets, and a broken tusk.

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3. Ganesha

This Ganesha is from the private collection of John and Blanchette Rockefeller.

(Image source)

It was the connoisseurs, and art historians, both Indian and foreign who brought these bronzes into focus as great works of art. While some of them strived to explain their mysticism of them, others went into ecstasy about the images themselves. Elaborate analysis and detailed descriptions about these "objets d'art" by a series of art historians, kindled the greed of collectors. And the market value of such sacred art turned priceless.

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Many have been sold by art thieves, many have been smuggled out of the temples or even the country and many have landed in museums or private collections. In times of war in the bygone era, with the invading Islamic armies who came from the north, many of these idols were buried according to the rites in the Agamas. It was also customary to bury them during floods, famines, and enemy attacks. These idols were hidden in secret vaults, under sand brought from rivers for conservation. Some were recovered, some not. Thus there has been persistent plundering of bronzes from our temples, though some of these treasures are now recovered and housed in temples or museums.

Over time some collectors bequeathed their stolen, but paid for collections to museums, while others, to this day, have them hidden in vaults.

These sacred bronze idols deserve the kind of care and protection they enjoyed a thousand years ago. Their beauty is profound, their antiquity is sacred. They are the nation's treasures to guard and enjoy forever. Hence with the use of technology, it must be endeavoured to put an end to such pillage and preserve these masterpieces, like several Indian archaeologists have been doing till date.

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## Aesthetic Exploration (3D) Part 2

**Aesthetic Exploration of Ganesha's part II (Forms in 3D)**

**The influence of the Ganesha's elements on the form**
Historical representations of Ganesha's forms indicate that he, in his different Bhangimas (postures and attitudes) is worshipped in Agamic temples.

One sees that in the temples built between the 9th and 12th centuries, Ganesha idols had either two arms or four arms and had no Alankara or ornamentation. Some of the idols of this period had a ribbon-like Prabhavali (the encircling arch) around the idol, or the Prabhavali resembled a semicircular tape or was flame-like. Along with Jatamukuta (a crown of matted hair), Ganesha is seen with or without a headdress. He also had a Udarabandha (waistband). Some of the idols did not have a mount or Vahana.

Ganesha idols during this period were seen in different types of sitting postures, like padmasana or the lotus pose, Utkatasana (a sitting posture, with one or both knees raised), Lalitasana the relaxed pose or at ease, Nritya meaning the dancing pose, etc.

All these idols had a pleasant and elegant form and were mostly carved out of hard granite.

Ganesha idols representing the Hoysala era have profuse ornamentation and have a lot of grace and elegance in the details. Ganesha idols in the 14th and 18th centuries had the usual Naga Bandha, Vahana, Karanda Mukuta and conventional details of the form. These idols represent the various forms of Ganesha according to the textual prescription.

All these examples are indicative of Ganesha's form of exploration that has been happening over the centuries. A similar study if conducted in all the different eras of the entire Indian history will definitely show a similar creative exploration.

As one sees the ebb and flow of the creative arts of each century, Ganesha's forms too have been influenced. It is extremely interesting to see the skills of that era translated and expressed in Ganesha's forms. The number of idols, the material exploration has only been expanding. The visual importance of this benevolent, boon conferring deity has become as important as the faith one has in him.

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**Significance of Ganesha's elements on form creation:**
Every part of Ganesha's body, such as the ear, nose, eyes, and trunk, has some significance. The various names of Ganesha indicate the nature of the different forms as has been seen in the earlier topic.

These elements are important in understanding these forms of Ganesha. There also exists an importance to each element in his form which contributes to understanding this most revered god. It could be faith, belief, and definitely a more divine principle which has endeared the form of this god to all. This is probably why one sees a vast visual, creative exploration of his form.

The importance of each of these elements of Ganesha's form is briefly presented below.

**The Ganesh's Head**
The elephant head has from the very beginning been an important characteristic of the benevolent God.

The Hindu gods are rarely seen with animal heads (some exceptions are the Vishnu Avataras- of Varaha and Narasimha). Ganesha is usually seen with one head only. One does see two, three, four or five heads on Ganesha idols in certain cases.

Two-headed forms are called Dvimukha Ganesha. The two heads symbolize the microcosmic and macrocosmic aspects known in philosophy and religion as Pindanda (or Sukshmanda) and Brahmanda. Three-headed Ganesha (Trimukha Ganesh) depicts the three states of being, inherent in any manifestation, which are the Gunas, that is Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva. Four-headed Ganesha (Chathurmukha Ganesh) is believed to represent- Manas, Chitta, Buddhi and Ahamkara.

Five-headed Ganeshas (Panchamukha Ganesh) are rather usual. The signification of the five-headed Ganesh may be explained in various manners. They may symbolize the five koshas(Annamaya kosha: the physical body made of matter, Pranamaya kosha: the breath body, or the energy body, Manomayakosha: the mental body, Vighnanamaya Kosha: the body of the super consciousness, Anandamaya Kosha: the body of cosmic bliss) as experienced by a yogi. Thus, the fifth head of Ganesha symbolizes the highest level of the yogic experience, called Anandamayakosha, or Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Pure Consciousness.

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**The headdress of Ganesha:**
The Ganesh headdress has diverse details in it. For example - sometimes, it's a Jata-Mukuta( a crown of matted hair), karanda-mukuta (a tall crown in the shape of a tiered truncated cone), or a kirita-mukuta (a crown of jewels).

**The eyes of Ganesha:**
Ganesha has two eyes but, many times, the third one is depicted on his forehead.

**The ears of Ganesha:**
Ganesha's ears are huge and are a distinctive feature of his elephant head. They are large enough to listen to all the prayers of everybody but, similar to winnow, they are believed to separate what is good (virtue) and what is not good (vice) for the worshipper.

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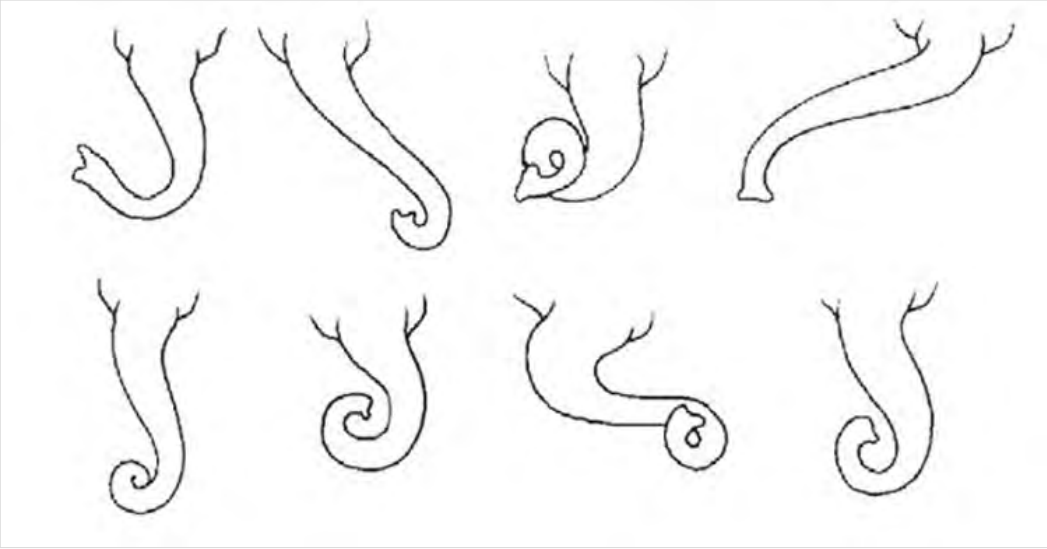
**The trunk of Ganesha:**
Ganesha's trunk is generally curved and twisted (Vaktra). Ancient scriptures believe that his trunk is curved because he uses it to turn around obstacles into opportunities for growth. The position of Ganesha's trunk holds a symbolic meaning. It is said that if the trunk is towards Ganesha's left then it indicates the direction of success. Towards the idol's right, it signifies moksha.

The Ganesha trunk is sometimes curved to the left side then he is known as Edampuri Vinayaka. , But sometimes it is turned to the right side which is a rare phenomenon when he is known as Valampuri Vinayaka, considered to be very auspicious. These two directions correspond to both ways through which obstacles may be turned around and the Supreme goal attained.

In most idols of Ganesha, the trunk is turned toward the left (from the perspective of the idol). Only in rare cases is it turned to the right.

Below are numerous trunk poses one can find on Ganesha idols.

**Valampuri Pose:** The trunk is turned to Ganesha's right. This form is very rare.



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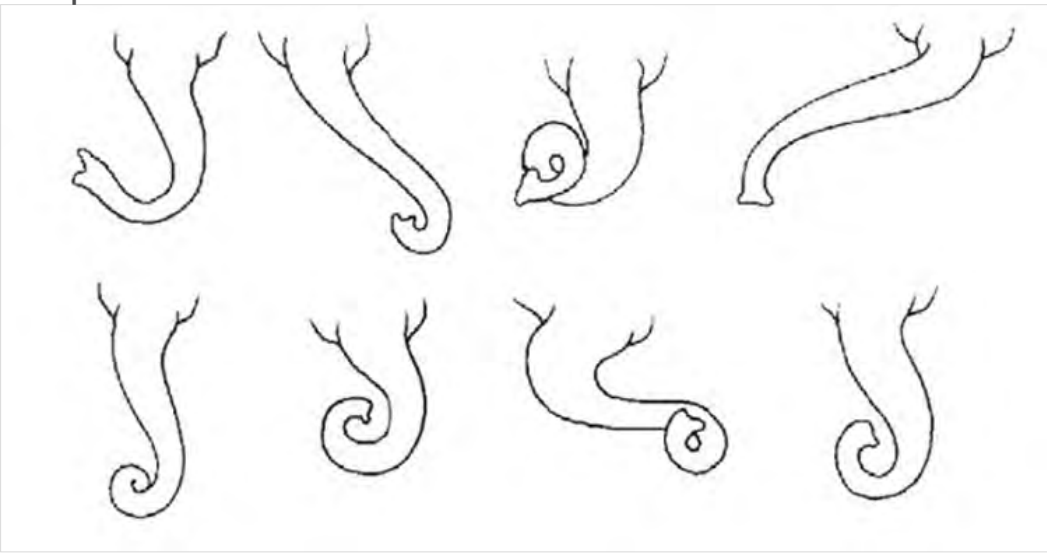
**Edampuri Pose:** The trunk is turned to Ganesha's left. This is the common form.



However, in certain cases, the trunk is totally unrolled and stretches over the body. The tip of the trunk is most often dipped into a bowl of a sweet or holds a Modaka.

The shape of the curved trunk suggests the writing of the sacred AUM. Thus, it is also a representation of Omkara or Pranava, the symbol of Brahman, the Absolute Reality. So, the trunk of Ganesha means that he is also the Supreme Brahman.

**Ganesha's tusk:**
Ganesha has two tusks, one of which is broken. He is often shown using his broken tusk, with its tip pointing down, held in his right hand like a writing tool. The broken tusk is one of the most peculiar features of Ganesha. Most times, this broken tusk is held by the right hand. The legend says that Ganesha broke his tusk when he fought against the devil Gajamukhasura.

Another myth says that Ganesha lost a tusk during a battle against Parashurama. He used this broken tusk as a pen to write the Mahabharata epic under the sage Vyasa's dictation.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/aesthetic-exploration-3d-part-2**

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**Ganesha's hands and the elements he holds in his hands:**
Ganesha usually has four hands. Sometimes he may have only two hands. But four, six, eight, ten, twelve or even sixteen hands are not uncommon. The number of hands are an indication of the power of the god, as he carries a multitude of elements in them.

The most usual elements are: The axe, the noose, the plate of sweet, the elephant goad, the broken tusk, and the mala. Some of these elements can also be considered as weapons, used by Ganesha to fight negative forces.

*The axe (Parashu) is a very common element that Ganesha idols are depicted to hold. Usually, it is held in the upper right hand. This symbolises the powerful weapon to cut all desires and attachments which result in troubles and sorrows.

* Ganesha holds a lasso or a noose (pasha), in order to catch delusions (moha) which is a deterrent to seekers of the truth. This noose is sometimes shown as a tightly coiled snake.

* The elephant goad or hook (Ankusha) to conduct elephants is the symbol of his sovereignty over the world. This goad symbolizes also anger (Krodha), which needs to be overcome by higher knowledge.

* A bowl of sweet or the Modaka is usually held in the lower left hand. In a Ganesha idol which has a left-turned trunk, it touches this sweet. The Modaka is also the joyful reward of the truth seeker while on the spiritual path.

Many a time, Ganesha idols are depicted holding a Mala or Akshamala made of 50 Rudrakha beads in their lower right hand. It corresponds to the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and symbolizes sound and hearing.

Other elements that some Ganesha idols may hold are:

* A lotus, which represents the supreme goal of the human spiritual evolution, that Ganesha offers to his worshippers.
* A blue lotus (Utpala) associated with the moon.
*A pomegranate, a mango, or a lime.
* A Kamandalu (a small pot holding sacred water).
*A Veena (the musical instrument).
* A book, a discus (chakra) etc.

The hands of Ganesha are sometimes in the mudra pose.

The boon-giving hand in the Varada mudra indicates his benevolence towards the devotees. The Varada mudra shows the palm open with fingers down.

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The hand in the abhaya mudra indicates that Ganesha removes fear and grants divine protection. The Abhaya Mudra shows the palm open with fingers up.

**Ganesha's stomach and body:**
The Ganesha's stomach is of a generous size, often decorated with a belt made of a snake. He wears the sacred thread (Yajnopavita), made of cotton or in some cases represented by a snake. Ganesha's largeness is attributed to the fact that all the manifestation is within him.
The names like Lambodara for Ganesha emphasize this phenomenon. His large belly also figuratively means that he has the ability to endure and digest all kinds of experiences.

**The colours used for depicting Ganesha:**
Ganesha according to many ancient scriptures is of a bright red colour. This is the reason why a lot of Ganesha idols are painted in a bright red colour, between a true red hue, and an orange-coloured one. Modern Ganesha idols are sometimes represented in black, blue or even yellow colours.

The names of Ganesha are also indicative of the colours used in that particular form. Hence, Dvija Ganapati is coloured like the moon, Dvimukha Ganapati is bluish-green in colour, Dhoomravarna Ganapati has a smoke-coloured body, Haridra Ganapati has a bright yellow body, Runamochana Ganapati is white just like the crystal stone, and Heramba Ganapati is of a dark green colour, etc.

In some cases, the colour of Ganesha's head and his body is different; for example- his head is brick red with a flesh-coloured body.

**The legs of Ganesha:**
The legs of Lord Ganesha are short. The understanding is that a short-legged person cannot run fast, and is also intelligent. An intelligent person does not run, he makes other people run using his intelligence and, hence is a true leader.

**The vehicle of Ganesha:**
Most of the idols of Lord Ganesha depict him sitting on a mouse or a mouse near him. The mouse (or Mushaka in Sanskrit) is the vehicle (Vahana) of Ganesha. Ganesha is huge while the mouse is very small. In Ganesh Purana, he is known as 'Aakhuvahan'. The meaning of 'Aakhu' is Mushaka or Maya. Hence this name clearly indicates that Ganesha achieved victory over maya and is the possessor of knowledge.

All these elements of Ganesha have been treated in different ways to achieve different forms. Since there is a strong religious aspect to Ganesha's form, the idols meant for worship do not deviate, and include all these elements according to Agamic and scriptural principles.

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**Material exploration:**
In these modern times, Ganesha's worship and presence have been reaching newer heights. The festival of Gan sha Chaturthi being a public religious festival has brought in the participation of many people. Organizing Gane-sha idols for such festivals year after year since Bal Gangadhar Tilak's time from 1893 has brought in a lot of explo-ration and expertise as well in terms of the materials used and the forms created. Ganesha's presence can be felt not only during this festival but all through the year, for Ganesha, has outgrown his primary, religious avatar and has become an omnipresent cultural icon with a number of small-scale and handicraft industries churning out a multitude of forms.

Ganesha has been carved from rocks, granite, sandstone, and marble for temples in South India. Giant stone monoliths have been created for outdoor worship, while exquisite small statues have been created for specific niches, and recesses in some shrines. In case of Swambhu (naturally created) Ganesha idols like in Maharastra, they have been painted vermillion or darkened with oil like in South India. Bronze, copper, silver and gold have been used extensively to create Ganesha statues for installation in the sanctum sanctorum or for use during temple festivals.

Apart from temples, for the sake of reverence in familial or private shrines, a wide range of materials have begun to be used. A great freedom of style is seen even with the most traditional of the Ganesha forms.

Materials like white or coloured marble, different types of quartz, soapstone in different colours, and alabaster, are the ones used to make large-sized Ganesha statues. Wood of various kinds- rose, teak, and sandalwood, are used to carve large or small idols based on the requirements in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Sometimes the wood-en statues may be painted or even inlaid with ivory.

Semiprecious stones like coral, amethyst, jade, tiger's eye, lapis-lazuli, malachite, ivory and ruby have been used for creating small statues of Ganesha, used more for decorative purposes.
Bronze casting by the lost wax process is also used extensively to create collector's items or regular idols of Gan sha. Copper and silver idols are created for worship more than for decorative purposes. Some of them may also be studded with gems.

A wide range of less expensive materials is also used to create Ganesha in two-dimensional or three-dimensional forms like Palm leaves, paper mache, cloth, paper, bamboo, ceramic, shells, terracotta, glass, varieties of plastics, etc.

A lot of points are considered before one buys a Ganesha idol to be kept at home, like the direction of the trunk, and the fact that the idol should not be unfinished or even broken.

Ganesha who has been revered as a religious symbol by the Hindus has now transformed into a cultural icon with his presence as statues, wall hangings, paintings, jewellery and many more products which will be explored in the forthcoming topics.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-invocation

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## Ganesha Invocation

**Important places in life where the Ganesha presence is required:**
It is a common practice to offer prayers to Ganesha before starting anything new or important as it is believed to bring in blessings, luck, wisdom, success and wealth. As the belief is strong that he removes obstacles and liberates one from desires, among all the Gods in the Hindu pantheon, Ganesha is given prime importance.

Whenever prayers are rendered, hymns and verses in Ganesha's praise are said first. Even on special festivals for other Gods, Ganesha is worshipped first before that God. On any important occasion – be it a child's first birt day, a new business venture, entry into a new house, or a wedding, everything starts with a prayer to Ganesha. A devout Hindu believes that any task started after invoking Ganesha is bound to succeed.

In most Hindu temples, at the entrance, there is a sanctum exclusively for Ganesha. Devotees first offer their prayers to him and then go on to offer prayers to the main deity of the temple. Also one of the important traditions of Hindus is to put a small Ganesha idol or a painting above the main entrance to their homes, to ward off evil and only allow the good to come in.

Most Hindu wedding invitations have Ganesha's image on them – as a small one on the envelope or as the main theme of the card itself. This combines the auspicious aspect with the decorative, thus the concept of Ganesha takes on many looks, from a simple printed icon in gold or silver to a plastic moulded element or even a highly decorated, jewel-encrusted one.
Ganesha Puja (prayer to Ganesha) is performed a few days before the wedding day or the previous evening, to give the proceedings an auspicious start.
Also during the Hindu wedding ceremony itself, the priest starts by invoking Lord Ganesha. This is done so that the wedding ceremony can go on without any obstacles, and also confer Ganesha's blessings for a long and happy married life.

The festival of lights, Diwali which is an important Hindu festival, is celebrated to mark the triumph of good over evil. Lord Ganesha, the Master of Wisdom, is worshipped during this festival, along with Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity. The Ganesha idol is placed on the right-hand side of Goddess Lakshmi and it is believed that the combined strength of both these deities will bless the devotees with maximum benefits.

Ganesha is a lucky mascot for a lot of Hindus. His image is used by many people as a lucky charm in their cars, on key chains and much more. Everyone has Lord Ganesha in their homes – as idols at the altar/ puja space, as figurines on display, as paintings, as wall hangings, and in many more colourful ways.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha

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## Presence of Ganesha

**Presence of Ganesha in Multiple Media – Products**

**Modern forms**
Ganesha though divine in origin, has been adapted to the modern day in many ways bringing in a new culture- Ganesha culture! The qualities that he is renowned for – wisdom, benevolence and problem-solving – have ensured his growth into something of a commercial best-seller.

Ganesha appears in several different shapes in items like greeting cards, calendars, diaries, business cards, bookmarks and many more imaginative spaces and products.

This one-god industry has the markets flooded with knick-knacks and gifts: jewelled pendants, key chains, coins, statuettes in silver, crystal, bronze, copper, (studded nowadays, with Swarovski crystals) etc. In terracotta, his idol makes for a charming addition to a garden.

With the internet and mobile phones dominating the individual, Ganesha websites, Ganesha wallpapers, virtual pujas, and even Ganesha ringtones for the mobile are commonplace.

A few categories of such products rich in the use of Ganesha imagery, iconography, or meaning are presented below.

Greeting Cards

Wedding Invitations

Calenders

Wooden Ganesha Idol

Design Resource

# Ganesha

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by
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Source:
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Small size idols

Medium size idols

Ornate idols

Multiple head idols

Baby Ganesha idols

Artistic idols

Ganesha as a musician

Home accessories

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Temple shops

Ganesha on apparel

Ganesha in jewellery

**Source:**
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Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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Source:
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## Greeting Cards

A greeting card for Diwali or New Year with beautiful Ganesha imagery.

Design Resource

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## Wedding Invitations

A sample wedding invitation: a plastic moulded, gold-coloured Ganesha surrounded by decorative motifs also in gold form the central design element. It is considered extremely auspicious to have the Ganesha element in a wedding invite as a marriage is a new beginning and an important phase of life.

A sample wedding invitation: a plastic moulded, gold-coloured Ganesha surrounded by decorative motifs also in gold form the central design element. It is considered extremely auspicious to have the Ganesha element in a wedding invite as a marriage is a new beginning and an important phase of life.

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Another example of a wedding invitation with a plastic moulded Ganesha in gold along with gold decorative elements and gold-coloured text against a dark maroon background.

A wedding invitation in gold has a maroon sleeve. The sleeve has a simplistic Ganesha representation in gold that adds a unique touch. Many such artistic and graphic explorations of Ganesha's form are seen in such media.

Design Resource

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## Calendars

There are many calendars that use Ganesha illustrations. The pages of the calendar samples below show artistic interpretations of God. Ganesha's basic identity is intact. The elements in the form, the colours and presentation lend to a unique graphic identity.

Ganesha illustrated calendar

Design Resource

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Some more examples of Ganesha illustrations on the different pages of a calendar. The different postures and representations of Ganesha are based on the names of Ganesha given for each month.

Design Resource

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The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/wooden-ganesha-idol

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## Wooden Ganesha Idol

Many large-sized Ganeshas grace the lobbies of corporate headquarters, hotels, and hospitals. These are exquisitely carved idols in wood.

A wooden Ganesha idol seated on a lotus base, with a benevolent look. The statue is painted with gold accents to give it an antique look.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
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## Small Size Idols

The various elements of Ganesha and the elements that he holds in his hands are played with while designing new idols, products related to him or featuring him and also handicrafts related to him.

A few varieties are described below:

***Ganesha idols:** Ganesha idols are available in all sizes-huge statues to very tiny ones. They are available in so many materials that it can be easily said that there is no material that has not been used to create his images! It can also be said that there is no distinction between where one may find a Ganesha image. The following images are a few examples of Ganesha in different sizes, different materials and in varied postures and styles.

1. A tiny plastic moulded Ganesha in gold colour ( approx 20mm in height ) with minimal detailing and an organic form.

2. A tiny ceramic Ganesha(approximately 20mm in height) with simplified styling where the ears and the curved trunk are the main features.

Design Resource

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3. A tiny brass Ganesha (approximately 30mm in height) styled with emphasis on the ears and the curved trunk.

4. A tiny ceramic Ganesha (approximately 40mm in height) with a traditional look, with a gold crown, dhoti and tilak.

5. A tiny Ganesha (approximately 20mm in height) carved out of a semiprecious stone.

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6. A tiny ceramic Ganesha (approximately 40mm in height) with minimal features and the highlight being the turban detailing.

7. A moulded Ganesha in fibre/plastic (approximately 50mm in height) with an organic form with emphasis on ears, head and curved trunk.

8. A carved Ganesha in a single semiprecious stone Malachite (green) (approximately 40mm in height).

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9. A tiny Ganesha made out of blown glass elements shaded in black colour (approximately 20mm in height).

10. A tiny Ganesha made of glass elements that are coloured and with a gold finish at places seated on a glass leaf) (approximately 60mm in height).

11. A Silver Ganesha (approximately 20mm in height) in traditional styling with gold accents to be placed in altars for personal worship.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/small-size-idols

1. Introduction
2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8. Presence of Ganesha
- 8a. Greeting Cards
- 8b. Wedding Invitations
- 8c. Calenders
- 8d. Wooden Ganesha Idol
- 8e. Small size Idols
- 8f. Medium size Idols
- 8g. Ornate Idols
- 8h, 8i, 8j, 8k, 8l, 8m, 8n, 8o

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12. A brass Ganesha with a green patina resting on a decorative base (approximately 60mm in height).

13. A carved Ganesha in dark brown soapstone in a very traditional, South Indian temple idol type of styling (approximately 40mm in height).

14. An artistic representation of Ganesha seated on the back of a tortoise in painted terracotta with great emphasis on his headgear (approximately 80mm in height).

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15. A brightly painted ceramic Ganesha with emphasis on the large elephant ears (approximately 50mm in height).

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## Medium Size Idols

**Medium-sized Ganeshas in different materials:**

1. A moulded Ganesha in coloured resin (approximately 70mm in height) giving a translucent appearance.

2. A glass Ganesha (approximately 95mm in height) with the details carved in such a way that the image is seen from the opposite clear side.

Design Resource

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3. A finely polished glass Ganesha with (approximately 80mm in height).

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4. A Ganesha moulded in Plaster of Paris (approximately 110mm in height) with an integrated form and a silver crown. The idol is painted in the sacred orange colour that is usually found on Ganesha idols in the temples.

5. A hollow Ganesha idol in terracotta (approximately 140mm in height) with etched details and a very earthy presence.

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6. A moulded Ganesha in plastic (approximately 70mm in height) seated on a simple throne like structure. The colours used and the painting style gives the Ganesha an antique effect.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/ornate-idols

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## Ornate Idols

1. A gold-coloured, plastic moulded Ganesha (approximately 90mm in height). Though the form is simplistic, all the features are enhanced by gold jewelled elements and the use of a deep red for the dhoti, crown, and seating.

2. A plastic moulded Ganesha (approximately 100mm in height including the seating) encased in a transparent acrylic structure. Both the idol as well as the box are encrusted with gold jewelled elements giving a feeling of richness.

Design Resource

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3. A white marble Ganesha in an organic form, (approximately 80mm in height). His features are enhanced by the use of Tangore painting-style jewellery, semiprecious stones and accents.

4. A showpiece metal Ganesha (approximately 60mm in height) where just his face, trunk and ears evoke his entire presence. This is a modern form of interpretation. The ears and the supporting arch are encrusted with stones and the trunk is enhanced by the use of the sacred orange colour.

5. An ornate Ganesha (approximately 6 inches in height) with a blue resin body and gold-plated jewelled ornamentation seated on a decorated block of marble, holds a wooden flute reminiscent of Lord Krishna. This idol was created by the company Adler and Roth. It has both decorative and symbolic value with a unique signature style and an elegant look and feel. This is a perfect gift item for any special occasion.

6. An article in a leading newspaper showcases a variety of unique, artistic Ganeshas that are available in the present times.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/multiple-head-idols

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## Multiple Head Idols

1. A tiny Panchamukhi Ganesha – meaning Ganesha with 5 heads (approximately 15mm in height) in brass. He is seated on a lotus base with traditional styling similar to that is found in temple idols.

2. A three-headed Ganesha (approximately 60 mm in height) made out of clay. This is a very artistic representation of a modern form of Ganesha in the use of colours, features and decorative elements.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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3. A metal Panchamukhi Ganesha in a standing posture (approximately 140mm in height) with an antique copper finish and traditional styling similar to that found in temples.

4. A moulded Panchamukhi Ganesha in plastic (approximately 40mm in height) in a standing posture. The colour used is reminiscent of a stone and the features are similar to a carved temple idol.

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# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/baby-ganesha-idols

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## Baby Ganesha Idols

Modern Ganesha statues sometimes draw inspiration from religious connections. Some statues may portray him with his parents – Shiva and Parvati, and his brother Skanda or with Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth) and Saraswati (Goddess of learning) to emphasize the importance of the trio for attaining wisdom and success. He may be seen holding a trident, and sometimes may sport the three horizontal lines on his forehead, symbolic of Shiva.

**Ganesha as a baby in idols:**
Ganesha statues sometimes depict him in the form of a baby holding in his tiny hand a pat of butter similar to Lord Krishna's childhood. He may also have a peacock feather tucked in his head. He may be seated or laying down on the coiled folds of a giant serpent whose multiple heads are spread above him in protection -reminiscent of Lord Vishnu. He may be depicted seated under a Kalpa Vriksha - the wish-fulfilling tree.

1. A baby Ganesha idol holding a pat of butter in his hands, (approximately 60mm in height) made in silver, and tarnished to give an antique effect.

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2. A tiny moulded Ganesha in plastic styled like a baby, seated and having a bald head (approximately 30mm in height).

3. A moulded Ganesha in plastic styled like a baby in a resting posture. The idol is adorned with semiprecious stones on the headgear, and ears and has painted accents to make it colourful.

Design Resource

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4. A small clay Ganesha idol in a crawling posture on a decorative base moving towards a plate of sweets (approximately 50mm in height). The Ganesha is painted in black, with blue, and green colours used as accents and white colours used for details. A completely modern, artistic interpretation of Ganesha.

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https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/artistic-idols

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## Artistic Idols

People perceive Ganesha as a friendly God, and many artists take the liberty to portray him in many different forms as they perceive him in unusual surroundings and materials. In fact, not only Indians, a few well-known porcelain and crystal manufacturers are creating limited edition figurines of the beloved elephant-headed-God which are quite expensive and are almost like collectable items!

1. A Ganesha idol hand moulded in clay. He is reclining on the serpent Seshasai like Lord Vishnu. (Approximately 80mm in height) The colours used to paint the idol are bright and the detailing of the serpent and Ganesha are apt. Though the concept used is ancient, the execution is modern.

2. A Ganesha in a reclining posture in moulded plastic (approximately 100mm in height) the colour of the idol is reminiscent of a carving on a coloured stone. The features and detailing are traditional and in the background are a large bunch of lotuses blending well into the idol. This idol is also an example of a traditional concept interpreted in a modern material, yet retaining the traditional look and feel.

Design Resource

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3. A decorative piece in moulded plastic depicting a boat with a swan neck in the river. It has a Ganesha idol seated in it under a canopy. The boat is mounted on a black wooden block. (Approximately 120mm in height) The colour is reminiscent of terracotta. This is an example of a modern artistic interpretation of God in terms of material and the liberty of expressing him in imaginative ways.

4. A decorative piece with a Ganesha head wearing a crown placed on two palms, held in reverence. This is also an example of a modern artistic interpretation of Ganesha. The piece is made of moulded plastic and is meant for the purpose of gifting. (Approximately 90mm in height).

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5. A moulded Ganesha in plastic is approximately 170mm in height. The main element here is a tusk inside which is seated a colourful, exquisitely detailed Ganesha. A swastika emblem also adorns the tusk. Both the tusk and the Swastika are symbolic of Ganesha, which indicates the creative interpretation of Ganesha in a decorative product.

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6. A plastic moulded artistic creation of Ganesha, approximately 60mm in height. The conch shell has been used to depict the Ganesha face, which is placed on the red petals of the hibiscus flower along with a green leaf - a favourite of God. A larger shell acts as a support. This again is an imaginative interpretation of Ganesha.

7. A brass decorative piece approximately 60mm in height. Ganesha is seated in a beautifully detailed "Aum" the sacred primary sound. The base on which both are seated is also exqusitely carved. A unique representation of Ganesha.

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8. A decorative brass stand (approximately 50mm in height) with a 2 dimensional Ganesha image. The rich colours are created by enamelling.

Design Resource

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## Ganesha as a Musician

Ganesha statues sometimes show him playing a musical instrument - a drum, a mridangam or Tabalas, or the veena etc. Usually, at the beginning of concerts, Indian musicians dedicate a short invocation to Ganesha so this could be a reason for such inspiration.

1. A plastic moulded Ganesha (approximately 70mm in height) holding a sitar. The form of Ganesha is large and has a soft benevolent look. Since he is portrayed as a musician, the sitar is highlighted with gold colour.

2. Ganesha is depicted as a musician playing different instruments. The decorative pieces are approximately 60mm in height and moulded in plastic. The features and the elements of the Ganesha-faced musicians are similar to normal people.

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3. A brass Ganesha made in the Bastar style in a seated posture and reading a book (approximately 40mm in height). This is a handcrafted piece used for decorative purposes or for gifting.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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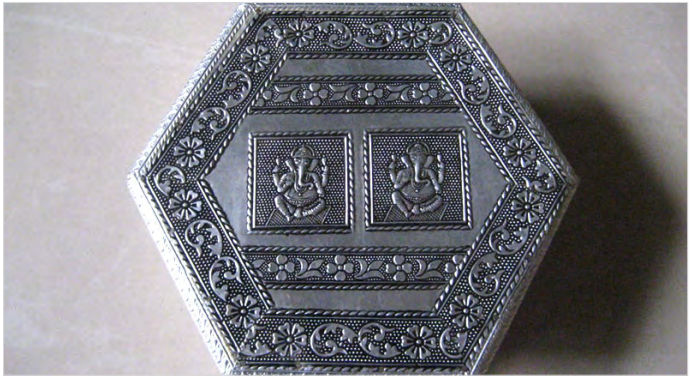
## Home Accessories

**Ganesha's presence in home accessories:**
Many contemporary home accents like cushion covers, storage boxes, incense burners, table lamps, and paper-weights, also explore the Ganesha icon.

1. A rectangular wooden storage box, decorated with a small colourful Ganesha painting in the front and with motifs and borders on the sides. The box can be used for storage and also to add an Indian accent where ever placed at home, or in an office space.

2. A decorative hexagonal wooden storage box covered in beaten silver sheet, has two etched images of Ganesha. The silver sheet is covered with decorative floral motifs as borders, around Ganesha. Though this box is mainly used for storing dry fruits it is also used as a part of the home decor. This box brings in an old-world charm of carved silver items that were used by Indian royalty.



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3. A unique material to create a decorative Ganesha- a coconut! The dried husk of the coconut is carved into Ganesha's form and the eyes, tusk, sacred thread and horizontal strokes of Vibhuthi (sacred ash) with a dot of vermillion in the centre- all add to give the complete Ganesha feel.

4. A tiny framed Ganesha that can be used to decorate a wall or be placed on a table. The Ganesha face is placed on a jewel-encrusted Aum. The orange colour of the Ganesha, the deep red background and the surrounding gold frame all are very traditional elements used in Ganesha temples.

Design Resource

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8h. Multiple Head Idols
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5. A Ganesha created on the lines of a stuffed toy. The materials used are different types of printed fabrics and cotton stuffing. The cute features of this Ganesha are such that it would appeal to a child. The Indian prints on the fabrics and the colours chosen along with a baby-faced Ganesha, combine two unusual things to bring out an Indian toy Ganesha.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/temple-shops

1. Introduction
2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8. Presence of Ganesha
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## Temple Shops

**Products sold outside Ganesha temples:**
Many stores outside the popular Ganesha shrines sell a lot of products related to him like key chains, stickers, idols, photo frames, pendants etc. The images below give a glimpse of some of these shops with a variety of Ganesha merchandise.

1. The shops are crammed with a multitude of religious articles.

3. Brass Ganesha idols on display in one shop along with Goddess Lakshmi.

2. An array of devotional music CDs on display which includes some related to Siddhi Vinayaka.

4. Colourful plastic moulded Ganeshas covered in protective plastic film on display in a roadside shop.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

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by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/temple-shops**

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5. Paper stickers, and photo frames of Ganesha singly and along with Goddess Mahalakshmi on display.

6. The two paper stickers of Ganesha shown below depict him surrounded by abundant wealth in rupee notes and gold coins. These are usually used to adorn walls in a puja room or the shrine space in homes or any place that devotees feel suitable.

Design Resource

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IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/temple-shops**

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7. A paper sticker of Ganesha (approximately 90mm h x 70mm w) in the form of the idol in SiddhiVinayaka temple, Mumbai.

A sticker like this is generally carried in wallets, or placed at a work desk or on a car dashboard, or stuck to windscreens of auto-rickshaws, cars, or mirrors. The stickers come in many sizes, colours, designs and formats. Items like stickers, key chains, lockets, and fingerings carrying the images of Ganesha are carried on a person's body. These are examples of mobile shrines; Rings and lockets give a person, the user a feeling of security, a feeling of being protected by God always as his image is constantly present on the person's body.

8. A decorative photo frame in metal approximately 35mm in height, coloured in green and red enamel paint carries the image of Ganesha in the form of the idol in SiddhiVinayak temple, Mumbai.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/ganesha-apparel

1. Introduction
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## Ganesha on Apparel

Ganesha is as much a fashion designer's delight as the artist or iconographer. A lot of printed apparel like t-shirts, Indian kurtas and scarves have Ganesha forms in the printed or embroidered/embellished form as modern fashion statements. Some accessories like sling bags, leather bags, cloth bags, and wallets, too sport the Ganesha icon.

1. T-shirts sporting printed colourful Ganesha images. One is a traditional image as seen in old calendars and paintings. The other is a modern graphic interpretation of Ganesha'sform.

(Images source)

2. A hand-painted Ganesha graces the front of the t-shirt and a graphical Ganesha in the Aum form is created on the back.

(Image source)

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/ganesha-jewellery

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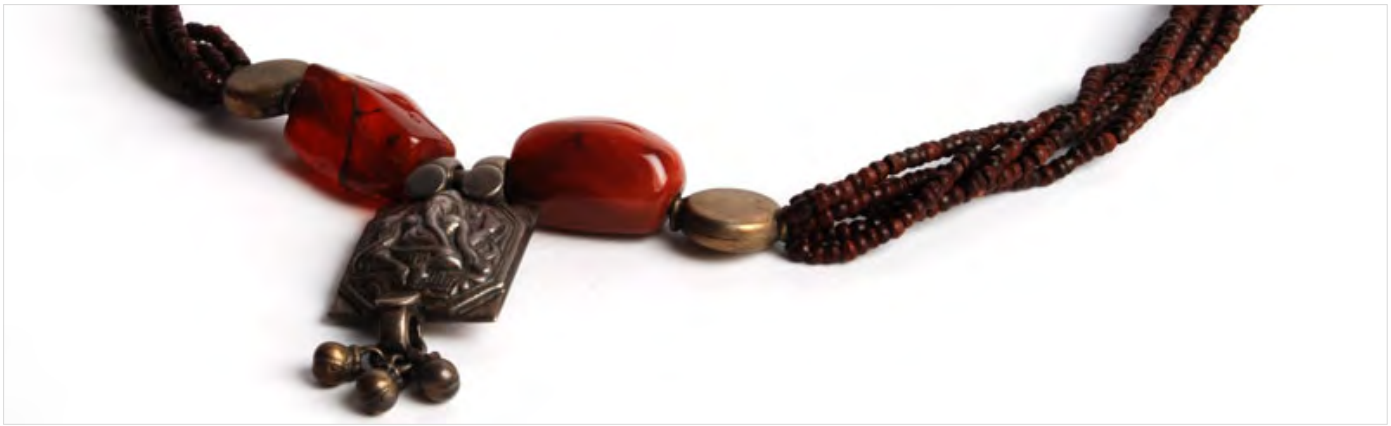
## Ganesha in Jewellery

**P**ower of Lord Ganesha as the remover of obstacles and bestower of blessings, owning such jewellery pieces becomes very essential. There are also several jewellery collections created by leading jewellers that use different forms of Ganesha as the main theme. Precious metals like platinum too are used by some of them.

A few examples of these Ganesha-inspired jewellery pieces are presented below.

1. This is a neckpiece that has a seated Ganesha in the pendant form. The tiny brown wooden beads, the largish orange beads and two flat silver beads are arranged in an interesting way to highlight the silver Ganesha pendant. The neckpiece exudes a very traditional Indian look, through the use of these materials.



Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
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2. A tiny pendant in the form of a cylinder (approximately 25mm in height and 10mm in diameter). This encases a very tiny Ganesha in gold colour and the glass cylinder of the pendant is encircled by decoratively etched gold bands that enhance the look of the pendant.

3. A beautiful neckpiece that has a colourful painted Ganesha (in miniature style) as a pendant. The pendant has a sliver of marble of approximately 3mm thickness that is encased in a gold-polished silver frame that is encrusted with semiprecious stones. The use of ruby beads and tourmaline beads around the pendant accentuates the Ganesha painting. The use of strings of tiny pearls to hold this pendant makes it an entirely unique piece of jewellery. This is a good example of modern fusion styling where different materials, traditional Indian styles, and manufacturing methods are all combined to create a new genre of jewellery pieces, which could become heirloom pieces.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/presence-ganesha/ganesha-jewellery**

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4. A neckpiece that has a temple jewellery-inspired Ganesha pendant in gold. The look of the pendant is enhanced by the use of bright green semiprecious stone beads and red silk threads along with other interesting beads.

This piece of jewellery uses the modern creative design principle which incorporates a bit of the old and a bit of the new thus bringing in a new expression.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
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5. A pair of silver earrings that have colourful miniature Ganeshas painted on paper as the main design element in them. These earrings indicate the extent to which Ganesha has seeped into the consciousness of Indian designers. His form inspires a multitude of jewellery items.

6. A pair of earrings that have Ganesha as the main design element. The use of the styling of the South Indian temple jewellery is very evident in the choice of the design and the gold colour.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art

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## Ganesha in Art

**2D Art Forms of Ganesha- Paintings**
IIndian art is vast. Many themes, many styles, many formats, and many materials have been explored in its long history. Ganesha has been a strong subject for artistic exploration. The exploration of Ganesha as a subject is immensely popular, and one creating such art forms feels close to the divine and benevolent God. The sheer range is overwhelming!

A few styles of painting where Ganesha is a popular subject are mentioned below:

1. One can see Ganesha featured in a number of miniature paintings from Rajasthan, especially the renowned, Jaipur, Mewar and Marwar schools.

2. Kalamkari art from Andhra Pradesh that uses vegetable dyes has Ganesha represented singly or in relevant compositions.

3. Several Madhubani paintings on both cloth and paper feature Ganesha as a subject.

4. Tanjore and Mysore paintings feature Ganesha in splendorous forms, with gold leaf work inlaid with semiprecious stones.

5. Bhatik art too has Ganesha as a central element in their cloth wall hangings or cloth curtains.

6. Several hand-embroidered and hand-woven creations and tapestries use Ganesha as a subject. He is also seen in thorns (a decorative product hung above the doorway of homes) too.

7. Several artists choose to use Ganesha as a central subject in their paintings on canvas, paper, or other conventional or non-conventional mediums. Sometimes a series is created in dedication to Ganesha.

A few examples of Ganesha paintings done by individual artists in these modern times are presented below.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art

Ganesha in Paintings

Framed Ganesha Paintings

Ganesha wall hangings

Typography Ganesha

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Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/ganesha-paintings

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## Ganesha in Paintings

**Ganesha paintings in mixed media:**
The four examples of Ganesha paintings shown below are watercolours painted on paper. The paintings are faithful to the form of Ganesha but take creative liberties with the presentation and the usage of colours. Sometimes the essence of Ganesha is evoked just by a few master strokes or by the use of calligraphy at appropriate places as can be seen.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/ganesha-paintings

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The five prints shown below are watercolour paintings of Ganesha. Each one is based on the different names of Ganesha. Each one looks different though the theme is Ganesha, as they are the artist's interpretation and expression of the name. Hence the play of the different elements, attire, posture, and colours used in depicting Ganesha is visibly different in each one.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/ganesha-paintings

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Shown below are some more examples of Ganesha paintings. They are in mixed styles- some simplistic, some with elaborate details, some in monotone, some in a profusion of bright colours. These have been made using watercolours, oil colours or acrylic colours.

Ganesha is a very popular subject for artists and painters. The forms and styles he evokes in the minds of these creative people are endless!

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/ganesha-paintings

1. Introduction
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Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/framed-ganesha-paintings

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## Framed Ganesha Paintings

A framed Ganesha painting that depicts an artistic representation of the sacred God, in bright colours.

1. The many moods of Ganesha are captured by artists to come up with endless creations.

2. A Ganesha created on a metal plate and coloured with enamel paints, is framed with a distressed copper frame that echoes the use of metal in this unique art piece. This too is hung on a wall and adds decorative value to a home or office space.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/framed-ganesha-paintings**

1. Introduction
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3. The painting shown below has a vertical format. The presence of two horizontal distressed wooden members at the top and bottom of the painting along with the two brass bells on either side at the top take this painting to the realm of an art piece. This is an example of the modern form of Ganesha art, where a flat painting is enhanced by sculptural elements creating art forms with new identities. The painting also carries calligraphic representations of the sacred Ganesha hymn and the use of AUM- the primary sound of divinity.

An art piece of this kind gets dual importance- for the artistic representation of sacred Ganesha and its unique presentation; hence such Ganesha products are expensive. But they are still sought after as home decor pieces as they bring art and divinity to a home.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

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IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/framed-ganesha-paintings

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A close-up of the painted Ganesha in the vertical painting and the calligraphic styles used to represent the sacred Ganesha hymns.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/ganesha-wall-hangings

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## Ganesha wall hangings

1. A hand-crafted wall hanging that uses the Ganesha face as the central element. The use of traditional elements like the brass bells, the decorative motifs and the colours make it look like a sacred art piece.

2. A wall hanging depicts an intricate but brightly coloured painting of Ganesha, on a piece of bamboo. This is an example of a beautiful handcrafted product from India.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-art/typography-ganesha

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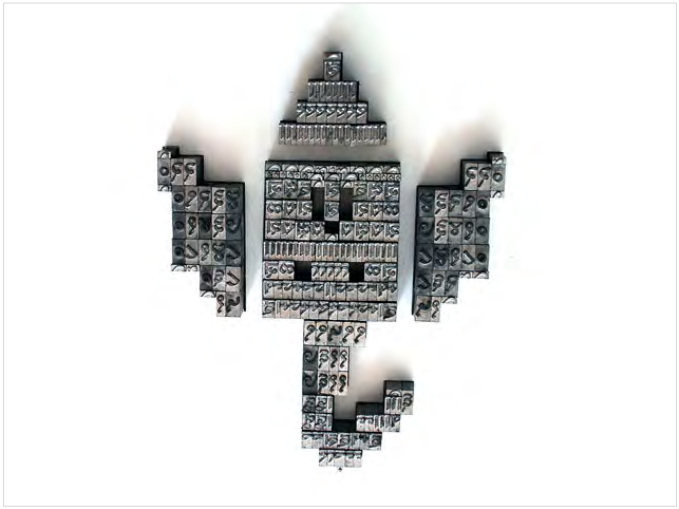
## Typography Ganesha

In the recent TYPOGRAPHY DAY (a typography workshop) that was conducted at Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay, Ganesha was present in a unique form to bless the event! The Ganesha used for the invocation ceremony, before beginning the workshop was created at IDC. This can be seen in the image below.

The Ganesha face was constructed using the metal type that had the alphabets of an Indian language (font) that is used for the purposes of printing. (Metal type means small rectangular blocks of metal that have raised characters on one surface, used for printing).



Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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This is a perfect example of Ganesha lending himself to be represented in one of the infinitely possible ways of expression. A Ganesha's head with his trunk is as powerful an expression as his entire form. Thus this Ganesha created at IDC for this occasion was a true representation of modern divinity!

The typography workshop was begun by following the norm in the Hindu tradition to light the lamp to invoke the divine Lord of learning- Ganesha's blessings before the commencement of anything new.

The rangoli that was present and the Lord Ganesha who was being invoked both had elements of typography in them!

There can never be a wrong way to present Ganesha, and he inspires a true artist in numerous ways. His form is always an artist's delight!

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-sculpture

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8. Presence of Ganesha
9. Ganesha in Art
10. Ganesha in Sculpture
    10a. Copper Ganesha Idols
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## Ganesha in Sculpture

Since ancient times, large Ganesha idols have been usually created for the purposes of worship in temples. But in the present times, many materials are being used for making large Ganeshas – wood, silver, marble, sandstone, copper, brass etc. Like in the many paintings and decorative items, a vivid sculptural exploration of Ganesha as a concept is seen in the numerous idols available in many handicraft and home decor stores across the country.

The usage of such large idols is more for decorative purposes rather than for worship. Also, people feel that having Ganesha artefacts at home/workplace not only adds an ethnic Indian touch but also brings in divinity and a sense of blessedness to the space.

There are many people who collect Ganesha statues as a hobby, for luck, for the love of God and also as a salute to him through the endless variety that is available in the various shops.

A few such examples are presented below.

Copper Ganesha Idols

Marble Ganesha Idols

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-sculpture/copper-ganesha-idols

1. Introduction
2. Ganesha - Reverence
3. Ganesha Symbology
4. Aesthetic Exploration (2D)
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## Copper Ganesha Idols

**Copper Ganesha Idols:**
A copper Ganesha that has an antique patina is used as a focal element in the living room of a home. The use of floral garlands adds a sense of sacredness to this sculptural form of Ganesha.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-sculpture/marble-ganesha-idols

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## Marble Ganesha Idols

Among the materials that are used to make Ganeshas, white marble is a favourite material. These Ganeshas are used more for worship in home altars/ shrines, public shrines, lobbies of corporate offices, and hospitals, than as decorative items. In Mumbai, there are many shops that sell these marble Ganeshas, along with idols of other gods.

A visit to one such shop "Sri Sai Murti Art " in Goregaon (E) of Mumbai showed that the variety in terms of size and design of Ganesha idols seems to be more than that of any other God. Some of these idols are custom-made according to the buyer's requirements.

The varieties of marble that are usually used are Makhrana marble which is available in Jaipur, Rajasthan, Italian, and Australian marble that is imported for making Ganeshas and other Gods like Krishna, Durga, Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman. Black marble is used only for making Shivlings, and Nandi (Shiva's mount).

The idols that are created in this shop vary from 1ft to 4, 6 feet in height. Sometimes 10 ft to 12ft idols too are created based on the requirement. The cost is proportionate to the size and varies from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 60,000. Also, the rates are dependent on the finishing quality that is required by the buyer.

Most of the idols are roughly carved out of single pieces of marble in Jaipur, Rajasthan and then brought to the Mumbai shop. The finishing touches are added here in the shop or at a workshop that is attached by skilled workers like the boy Amar (seen in the pictures), using chisels of varying sizes and buffing tools. Sometimes these white marble idols are hand painted in various colours especially the facial features, ornaments and clothing details, as per the buyer's need.

These marble carving skills come from years of practice and most of these skilled artisans start learning them from a young age. These skills are usually passed down through the generations. They usually adhere to tradition-al forms of the Gods, as is known from the sacred texts.

It is obvious from the serene-looking idols that there is a sense of belief with which these artisans work, or they would not be able to create such wonderful expressions which invoke faith. These artisans believe that they are doing sacred work for the Gods so there is a sense of deep satisfaction in them.

The following pictures show the array of marble Ganeshas and other Gods that are available in this shop. The sheer number of them stacked on dusty shelves indicates that there is a constant demand for such idols.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-sculpture/marble-ganesha-idols**

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Amar the skilled artisan inside the shop

The various kinds of buffing stones/tools are used to bring a smooth polished feel to the surface of the marble idol.

A large Ganesha idol that has been roughly finished awaits the finishing touches of buffing and polishing.

Ganesha idols in different sizes and styles share shelf space with other Gods in the following two pictures.

Amar adding finishing touches to a marble Ganesha idol.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-sculpture/marble-ganesha-idols**

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Colourful hand-painted forms of marble Ganeshas.

A large hand-painted Ganesha.

A hand-painted marble Ganesha.

A marble Ganesha next to a marble Saraswati – idols stacked on a shelf.

A plain marble Ganesha is seated next to a hand-painted colourful Ganesha.

Marble Ganesha seated on a lotus under a canopy next to a turbaned Ganesha.

Design Resource

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Ganesha idols in varying sizes and styles.

The following five images are all large-sized traditional forms of Ganeshas in various postures and styles:

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-literature

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## Ganesha in Literature

Ganesha's significance has been slowly increasing since the Vedic times. He has been transformed through time and history and has risen to his present stature in these modern times. Just as there has been an exhaustive exploration of Ganesha in products, in the literary world too one sees Ganesha being presented in many formats. There are books that explore his philosophical nature, his spiritual side, his charming stories, deep routed myths, etc.

He has inspired the creation of a vast range of books which at one end cater to the deeply spiritual and on the other end educate and entertain young children! This is how this beloved God is covered in the entire spectrum of topics. He is presented as benevolent, glorious, wise, bountiful, and adorable, and is a popular subject not only in India but in many Western literary circles too.

There exists a selection of wonderful books on Ganesha that apart from being informative and interesting to a devout follower, help introduce a novice to Hinduism through Ganesha.

**Ganesha literature during early ages**
It is in the Puranas, Upanishads and Vedic lore that one learns of Ganesha's significance and spiritual importance in the early ages.

**Ganesha Purana:** This is a text that chronicles the tales and the methods of worship of Ganesha. Its origins are believed to be between the 10th and 15th century AD. This Purana is presented in two parts. The first is the Upasana- Khanda which contains the details on how to express devotion to Ganesha. The 1000 names of Lord Ganesha known as the Ganesha Sahastranama (that is often chanted in the temples) are found in this part. The second part is the Krida –Khanda Which narrates the tales of Ganesha.
Apart from these two parts, this Purana also contains the Ganesha Gita and the description of the four avatars of Ganesha in the four yugas.

**Ganesha Gita:** This literary work is very similar to the famous and popular Bhagavad Gita, where Lord Krishna gives a discourse to the brave Pandava Prince Arjuna. Ganesha Gita is a record of a similar discourse between Gajanan- an avatar of Ganesha and king Varenya.

**Mudgala Purana:** This is a Purana of Lord Ganesha similar to the Ganesha Purana. Scholars date this Purana to the 10th – 15th century AD. This Purana also seeks to establish Ganesha as the Supreme Being. The eight incarnations of Ganesha are described here and these are very different from the Ganesha Purana in both content and form.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-literature

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**Ganesha Atharvasirsha Upanishad:** Also known as the Maha Ganesha Upanishad was created and popularised by the followers of the Ganpatya cult in Maharashtra. Ganesha is identified here as the Supreme Being. This is one of the 108 Upanishads in which Ganesha is the form given to the formless divine entity. This Upanishad has its origin in the Atharva Veda. In the early 18th century, there were other Ganesha Upanishads like Ganeshottaratapini Upanishad and Ganeshapurvatapini Upanishad which had similar themes.

**Ganesh as the Scribe:** Ganesha is accepted as the god of learning and the Patron Deity of letters and scriptures. The first section of the Mahabharata states that Sage Vyasa narrated the Mahabharata and Ganesha wrote it down. The longest epic in the world Mahabharata was not the job for an ordinary scribe and therefore Sage Vyasa requested Ganesh to become his scribe. Ganesha is said to have agreed to write it with only one condition that Sage Vyasa never pause in his recitation. The wise sage agreed; with a counter condition that Ganesha had to understand perfectly what was dictated before writing it down. It is also believed that Ganesh's mother Parvati, advised him to use his "buddhi" or intellect while writing it so that the message of the epic Mahabharata would be relevant to generations to come.

Another legend associated with Ganesha writing the Mahabharata is that of the broken tusk of Ganesha. After some days of writing the Mahabharata, it is believed that the stylus used by Ganesha broke and as he could not stop writing, he broke off one of his tusks and started writing with it. This symbolically stands for the fact that any amount of sacrifice is not too much to gain knowledge.

Design Resource

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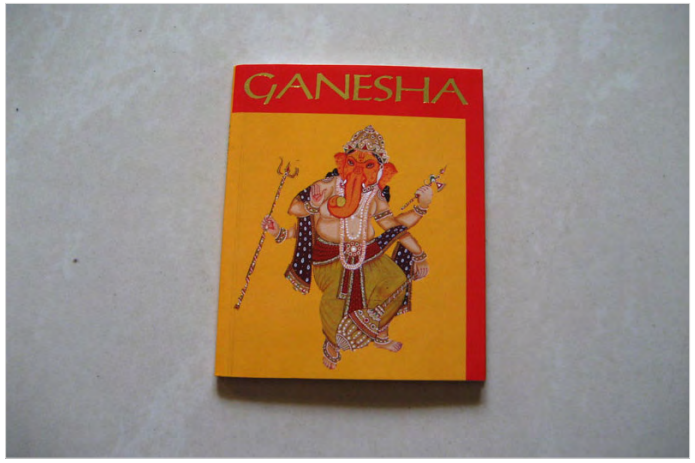
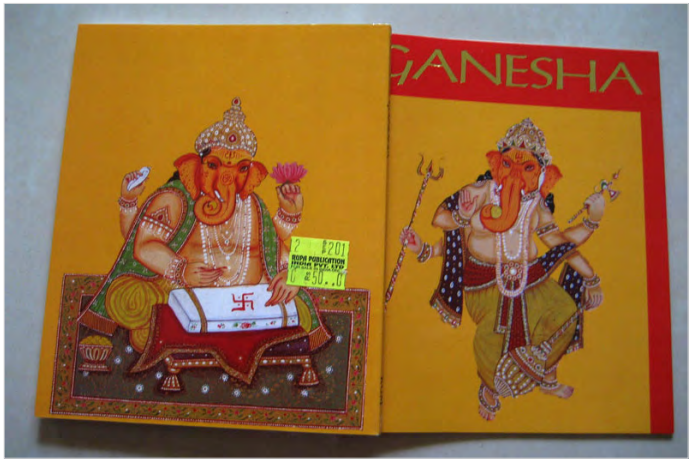
**Ganesha literature in the present day**

Apart from the literature on Ganesha during the early ages, the literary exploration of Ganesha has continued till the present day. Since Ganesha is one of the most popular gods of the Hindu pantheon, many authors have explored his vast being and presented their understanding in the form of many books. There is a section of books which delve into Ganesha's spiritual as well as philosophical side adding to the knowledge of Hindu mythology and Indian culture.

Some books on Ganesha have more visual content in the form of superb illustrations, paintings and/or photographs of the beloved god, like the one presented below.

**Ganesha, published** by KGM International



Of all the gods in the Hindu pantheon, it is Ganesha who is worshipped by all the sects. In practice too, it is Ganesha who is invoked before commencing worship of other gods as his blessings are considered auspicious. He is the Lord of Beginnings, the benign Remover of Obstacles, and thereby occupies an eminent position. Amongst His various attributes are an elephant goad, noose, broken tusk, chakra, mace, trident, lotus and a modaka. His one hand is usually raised in benediction blessing the entire universe. Ganesha is the embodiment of success, good living, prosperity and peace in life.
ॐ श्री गणेशाय नमः

Design Resource

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The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

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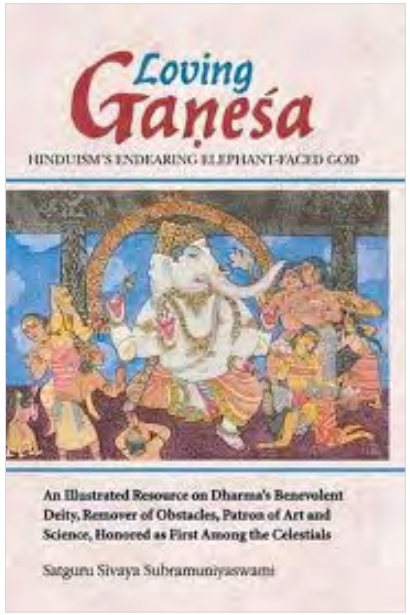
Some coffee table books carry excellent photographs of Ganesha idols from museums and personal collections. These books are admired and prized possessions.

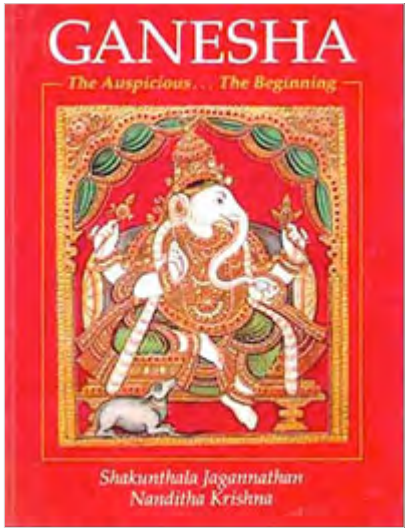
There are also books which entertain through charming stories and deep routed myths about Ganesha and promise to be interesting reads. A few examples are presented below.

**"Loving Ganesa" by Satguru Subramuniyaswami**


Loving
Ganesa
HINDUISM'S ENDEARING ELEPHANT-FACED GOD
An Illustrated Resource on Dharma's Benevolent Deity, Remover of Obstacles, Patron of Art and Science, Honored as First Among the Celestials
Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

(Image source)
This is an elaborate book about Ganesha, subtitled "An Illustrated Resource on Dharma's Benevolent Deity, Remover of Obstacles, Patron of Art and Science, Honoured as First Among the Celestials", written by the late Gurudeva of Hawaii - Satguru Subramuniyaswami. This book covers Ganesha's powers, pastimes, mantras, nature, science, forms, sacred symbols, and much more. It is also filled with numerous illustrations related to Ganesha.

**"Ganesha: The Auspicious"** by Jagannathan & Krishna




(Image source)
This is a well-researched volume that is equally appealing to the layman, the scholar and the devotee. It is illustrated with a number of photographs and line drawings of Ganesha. This comprehensive book covers all aspects of Ganesha, bringing out the relevance and importance of Ganesha from ancient times to the present day, covering historical and archaeological evidence, legends and parables, imagery and symbolism; thus forming an interesting read.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-literature**

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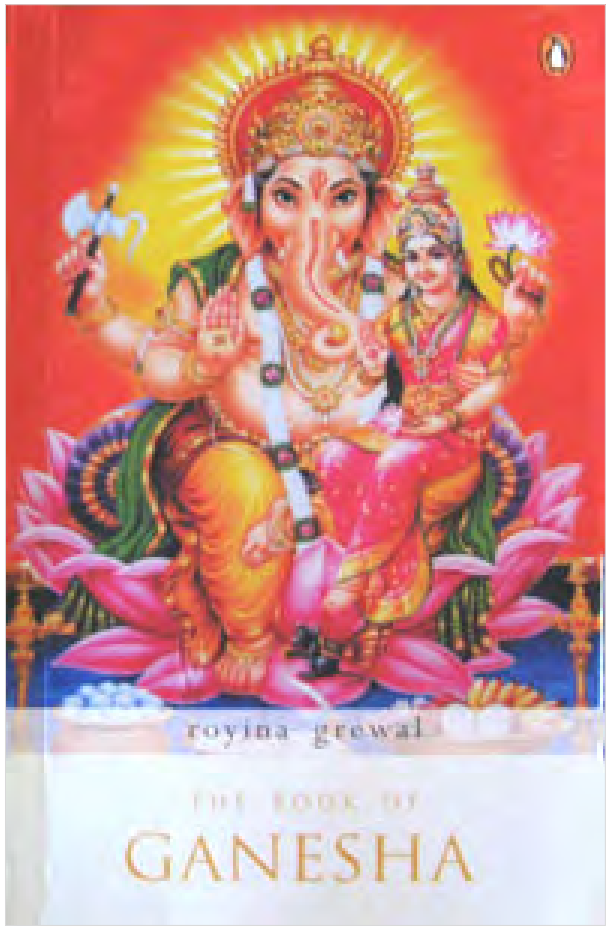
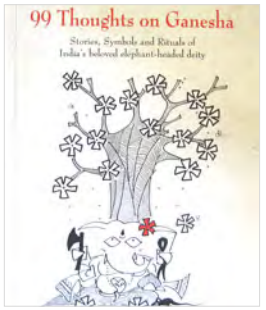
**"The book of Ganesha"** by Royina Grewal. Published by PENGUIN BOOKS




In this thoroughly researched and delightfully narrated book, Royina Grewal presents many stories of Ganesha, exploring their significance and how they reflect the times and the cultures during which they originated. Every aspect of Ganesha - be it his extraordinary birth, his elephant head, his broken tusk, his vehicle (the mouse), his appetite, or his anger, are scores of myths, each more colourful than the other. These are presented in this book.

**"99 Thoughts of Ganesha"** by Devdutt Pattanaik. Published by JAICO




This is one of the latest books on Ganesha by an Indian physician turned author, mythologist, and Chief Belief Officer of the Future Group, Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik. He has written and lectured extensively on the nature of sacred stories, symbols and rituals and their relevance in modern times.
This book puts forth stories, symbols and rituals of India's beloved elephant-headed deity which help us understand Ganesha better.

The book is divided into twelve parts covering many areas like the importance of Ganesha in family, festivals, stories, symbols, temples etc. The book also attempts to provide answers to questions like why a snake is coiled around Ganesha's stomach or neck, why Ganesha is always riding on or accompanied by a rat, why Ganesha is fond of Modaka as a sweet in particular, why blades of grass, known as Dhurva form a critical ingredient for Ganesha worship, why devotees of Ganesha avoid looking at the moon on the days that he is worshipped, why the word 'Shri' is seen on top of wedding cards even today and its significance, etc.

The reason behind the name of the book "99 thoughts" is related to the game of cricket by the author as this-- having scored 99 runs, when a batsman stands all set to get that one run to gain the century mark, he experiences the moment that is best associated with Ganesha.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
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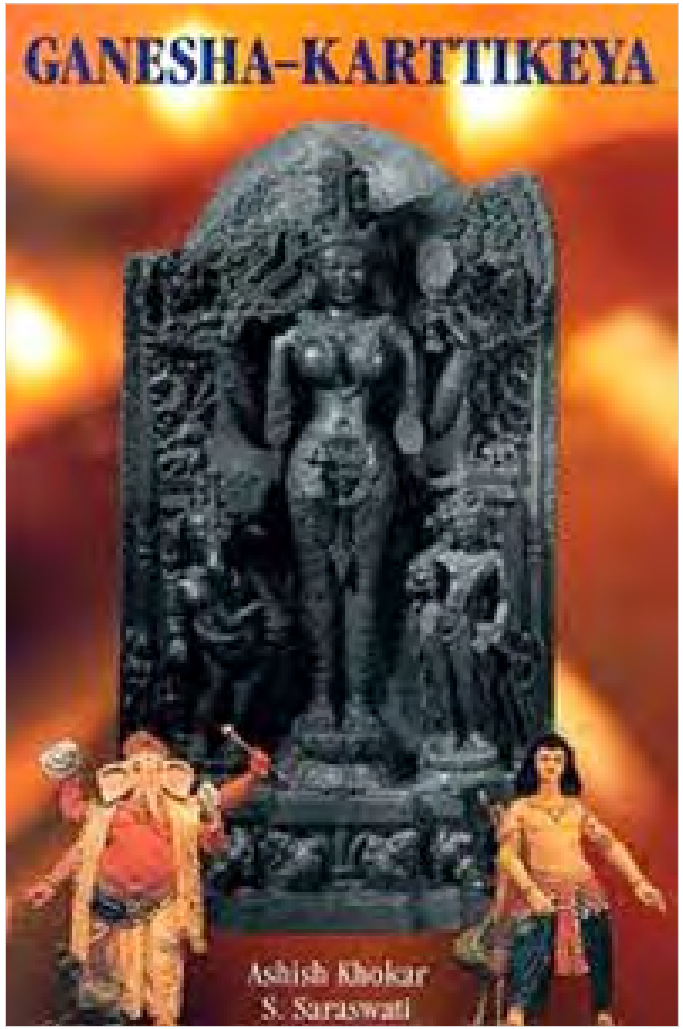
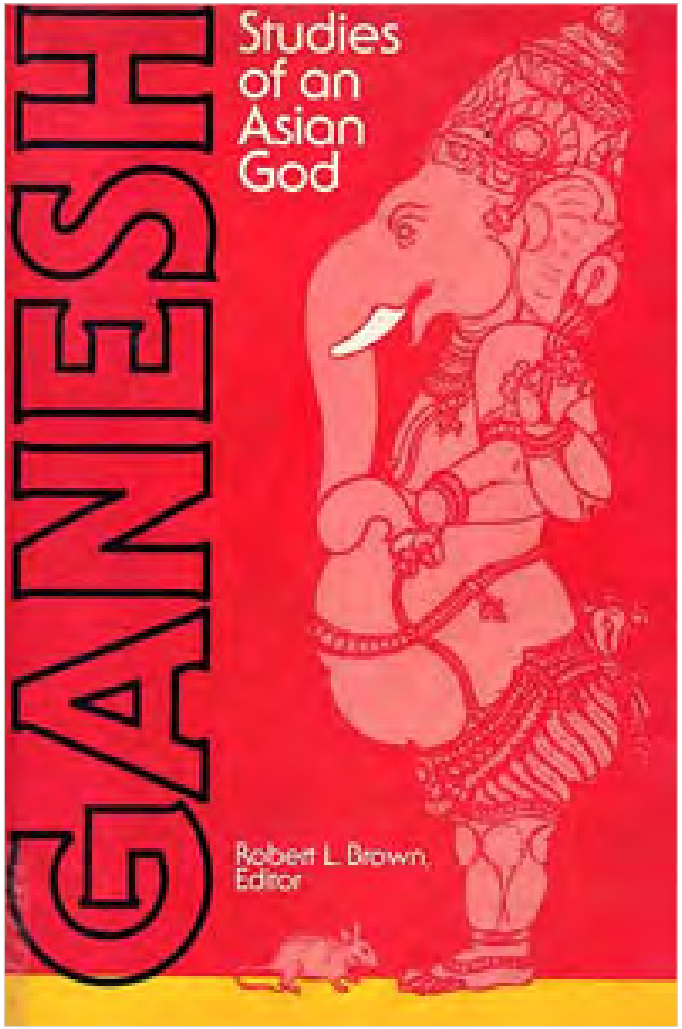
A few more books on Ganesha are listed below:

**Ganesha-Karttikeya,** by Ashish Khokar and S. Saraswati. Published by Rupa. Co.




(Image source)

**Ganesh – Studies of an Asian God**, by Robert L. Brown. Published by Sri Satguru Publications.




(Image source)

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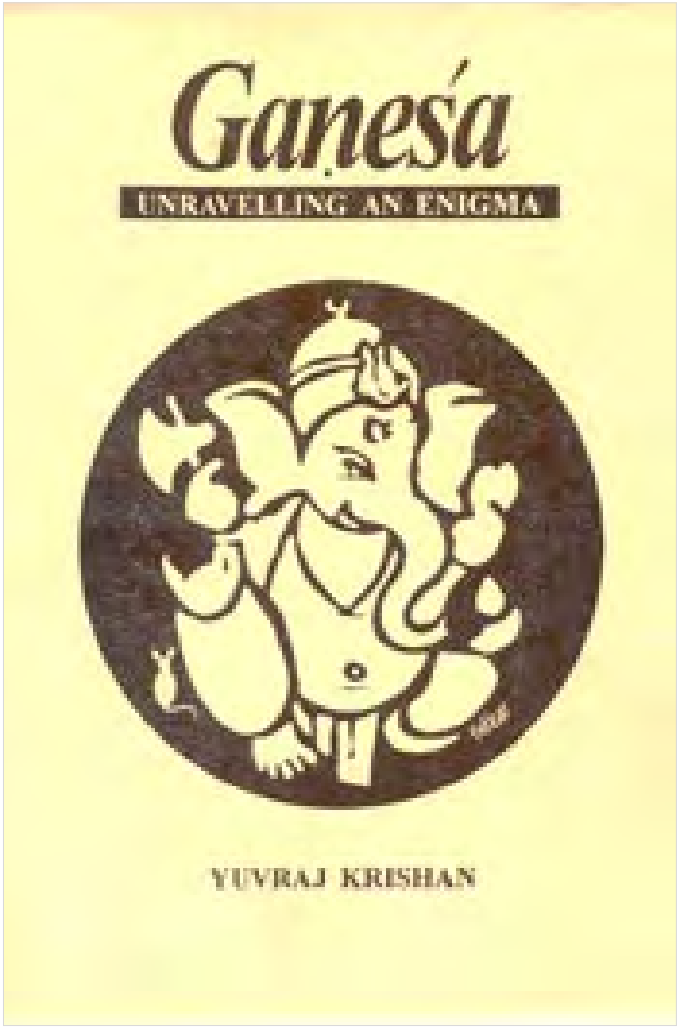
**Ganesa (Ganesha) Unraveling an Enigma** by Yuuraj Krishan. Published by Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd.




(Image source)

Sri Ganesha (With Sculpture) by M.L. Varadpande. Published by Abhinav Publications

(Image source)

**Books on Ganesha for children**

There is a category of books for the young reader, where Ganesha is presented as a friendly lovable character, with charming illustrations. Thus Ganesha is introduced to readers at an early age in appropriate ways which captivate and also convert one into a believer.

Some of these books are collaborations between Indian and Western authors indicating the fascination of Ganesha to be relevant all over the world. This also indicates that the Western world thinks acquiring knowledge of Ganesha even for young children, to be quite important !

Design Resource

# Ganesha

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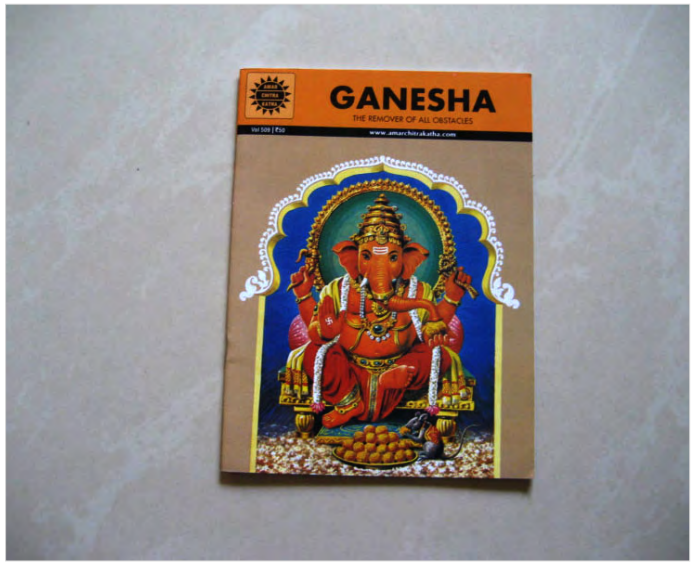
A few examples of the genre are presented below:
**"GANESHA- the remover of all obstacles"** by AMAR CHITRA KATHA:
This is an illustrated picture book on Ganesha, his origin and his emergence as the elephant- headed god of wisdom.

This book is a part of the very popular series in India since 1967, which through their numerous titles spanning Indian mythology, classics, epics, brave hearts, visionaries, fables and many other categories, gives a glimpse of India's glorious heritage.

These picture books are an interesting read, especially for the young reader who gets captivated by the illustrations as much as the story. Amar Chitra Kathas has been an integral part of many Indian children's early years, inculcating reading habits and the desire to learn more about our roots.



Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)
by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-literature

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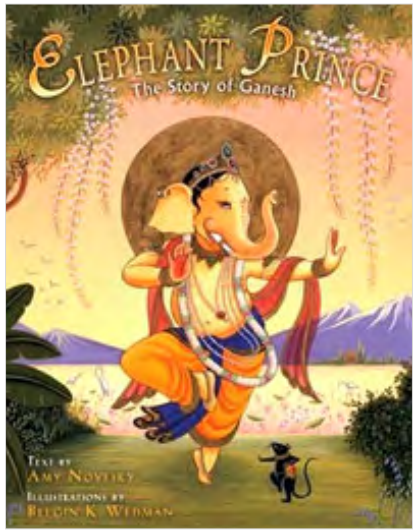
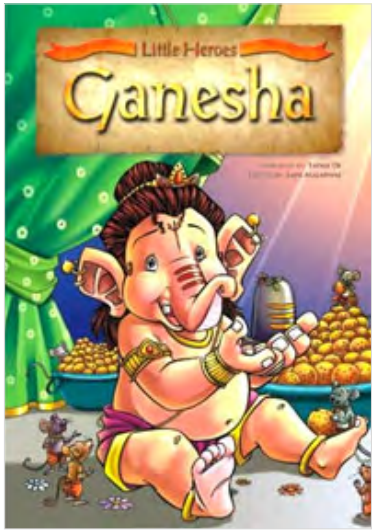
**"The Elephant Prince - The Story of Ganesh".Published by Mandala Publishing**




(Image source)
This book answers the question as to why Ganesha has the head of an elephant. Ganesha, with a large belly, mischievous and sweet, is one of the most familiar gods. The story is set in the Himalayas amongst all the other gods and goddesses. Elephant Prince tells the story of a remarkable bond between a mother and her son, a remorseful god, a generous elephant and the boy who became Ganesha. The book has illustrations that resemble classic Indian miniature paintings and complement the story. Also, this story is simple enough to be read aloud to children.

**"Little Heroes – Ganesha" by Tapasi De. Published by Mind Melodies**




(Image source)
This is a compilation of the different popular stories of Ganesha. This series of books introduces important personalities from the Hindu religion to children.

Design Resource

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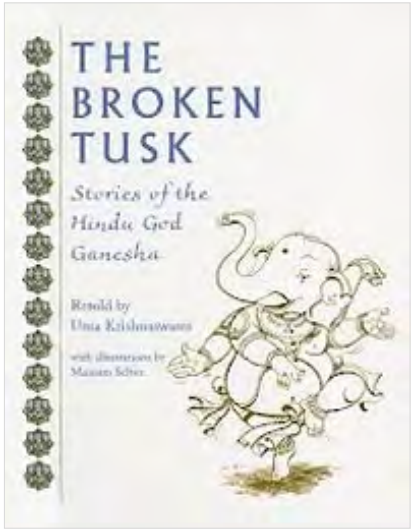
**"Ganesha's Sweet Tooth" by Sanjay Patel and Emily Haynes**

(Image source)
This book is about how Ganesha came to write the epic poem of Hindu literature, the Mahabharata. This being a book for children, Ganesha is depicted just like any other kid, except that he has the head of an elephant and rides around on a magical mouse. The story is about how Ganesha's love for sweets, especially the laddoo which leads to the breaking of his tusk while biting into a super jumbo jawbreaker laddoo. The upset Ganesha learns from the wise poet Vyasa, that what seems broken, that is the tusk, can actually be quite useful after all to pen the Mahabharata. This book is full of vibrant, graphic illustrations, expressive characters that appeal to a child while wonderfully depicting a classic tale.

There are many other books for children with Ganesha as the central theme like "The Broken Tusk" by Uma Krishnaswami, Maniam Selven, "Ganesha", by Namita Anand etc.,

**"The Broken Tusk" by Uma Krishnaswami, Maniam Selve:**




(Image source)
This is a collection of Hindu mythological tales for young readers. There are 17 stories about Ganesha - 'Ganesha's Head,' 'The Broken Tusk,' and 'Why Ganesha Never Married' - including one from Mongolia, where Ganesha entered the Buddhist tradition. This book also includes a pronunciation guide, glossary, and a prefatory discussion on Hindu mythology which are very useful for non-Hindus to understand. The pen-and-ink illustrations also add an angle of entertainment while reading this book.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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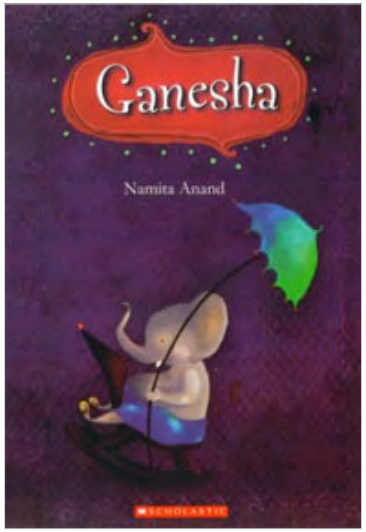
**"Ganesha", by Namita Anand from Scholastic Publishers:**




(Image source)
carries new and wonderful stories of the popular god, which cover ideas as to what happens when Ganesha refused to share a laddoo, or how one can please Ganesha by doing a hundred push-ups every day etc., Ten wonderful tales of Ganesha, are retold in this book in a fun and readable style for children.

**Blogs related to Ganesha**
Apart from books, the latest medium of expression namely the internet has its own share of e-books on Ganesha, blogs, and social networking sites (like Facebook) with dedicated pages on Ganesha. These blogs are created by people who have immense devotion to Ganesha and want to gather as much knowledge as possible about this dear god and also to spread the same amongst all Ganesha devotees.

Most of these blogs carry images, wallpapers and articles from various sources related to Ganesha. Some of them also provide useful information about Ganesha literature, mantras, Ganesha stuti, Ganesha names, pooja, prayers, Ganesha Chalisa, yantra, songs, videos on Ganesha, temples of Ganesha in and around various regions, apart from providing interesting information on Ganesha festivals, idols, and his family.

Thus Ganesha continues to exist and evolve in the minds of the believers along with social and technological developments. Ganesha is traditional, yet contemporary, and thus continues to be relevant in modern times!

Design Resource

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## Ganesha in Music

**Ganesha's Presence in the World of Music:**
Lord Ganesha is glorified as "VIGHNESVARA" (Lord of all obstacles) or "VIGHNA NASHAKA" (destroyer of all obstacles). Hence Lord Ganesha is worshipped at the commencement of every venture a devoted Hindu undertakes, whether it is a household duty, a religious worship, an academic pursuit, or a business adventure.

It is believed that Lord Ganesha is the inspiration of all music too as the rhythms and vibrations of the universe are channelled through him and that we humans are purely vehicles of Ganesha's universal musical expression.

**Chants**
Ganesha worship usually comprises reciting or chanting of the slokas (hymns that accompany religious rituals) or mantras while performing puja to the god. Siddhi mantras or Ganesha mantras contain specific powers of Lord Ganesha which get invoked through the chants. They are said to ward off all evil and bless the devotee with abundance, wisdom and success when chanted with the proper pranayama.

Earlier priests of the temples learned pundits, and Sanskrit scholars were the only people who knew these mantras and were passed on orally to future generations. But with technological advancement and the arrival of the concept of recorded music, audio cassettes made these available to the general masses. Nowadays these are rendered devotionally by many prominent Indian musicians and singers and are available in the form of audio CDs.

The following titles of some music CDs indicate a few such examples:
*Maha Abhishek Atharvasheersha -By Shubha Mudgal.
*Ganesh Mahamantra and Ganesh Gayatri - By Lata Mangeshkar.
*Om Ekdantaay Vidmahe - By Pandit Jasraj.
*Ganesh Mahamantra - By Jagjit Singh.
*Ganesh Mahamantra and Vakratunda Mahaakaaya - By Asha Bhosle.
*Om Gam Ganpataye Namah - By Pandit Jasraj.
*Ashtottarshat Naamavalee - 108 Names of Lord Ganesh - By Pandit Jasraj.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

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A music CD with 'Ganesha Mantra' rendered by singers Suresh Wadkar and Sanjayraj Gaurinandan.

**Bhajans**

Bhajans are a genre of music. They are simple songs expressing the many splendour emotions of the love for God, and are purely devotional. They are usually outpourings of music which are complete submissions or self-surrender to the divine through singing.

The groundwork for bhajans was laid in the hymns found in Sama Veda, the fourth Veda in the Hindu scriptures. They are distinguished from the Sanskrit shlokas by virtue of their easy lilting flow, the colloquial renderings and the profound appeal to the masses. The fixed tunes, repetition of words and phrases lend a kind of tonal mesmerism. Anecdotes, episodes from the lives of Gods, preaching of saints, description of God's glories have been the subject of bhajans.

Great exponents of bhajans were usually great devotees too, like Tulsidas, Surdas, Meera Bai, Kabir and others. In modern times, composers like Pt. V. D. Paluskar and Pt. V. N. Bhatkhande have tried to combine Indian classical music - which had been an exclusive domain of the elite - with bhajans, thereby democratizing the Raga tradition.

Ganesha has been a popular subject for this kind of musical rendering as well.

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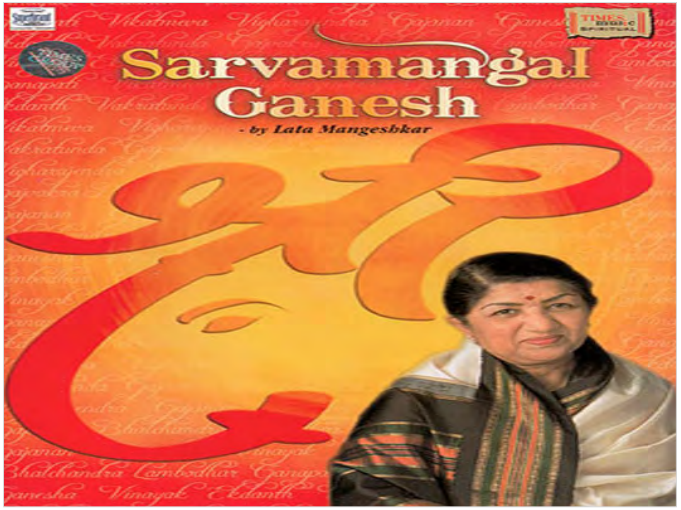
The bhajans have huge popularity with the masses. Bhajan mandalas (a gathering to sing bhajans) have been in existence in Indian villages since the beginning of the Bhakti era, and have proved to be great social leveller where individuals unhesitatingly participate in the singing, relegating their petty differences to the background. This participatory action elicits recreation and consequently a kind of mental relaxation. They close their eyes to ensure that they concentrate and thereby meditate on this near ecstasy. The words, tunes, rhythms and the typical repetitive style of the bhajans give a certain sense of permanency that is known as Shashwat (freedom from the state of flux).

Bhajans, as a genre, have come a long way weaving a home for themselves into the core of human hearts. There are many traditions of bhajans formed over the ages, and each sect has its own sets of bhajans and ways of singing them. These are sung in a group comprising devotees, with a lead singer.




A music CD having Ganesha bhajans, titled 'Sarvamangal Ganesh' rendered by the famous singer Lata Mangeshka.

Examples of some Ganesha bhajans sung by a few famous Indian singers are given below:
*Vakratunda Mahakaya by Jagjit Singh.
*Jai Ganesh Deva by Suresh Wadkar.
*Sukhakarta Dukhahrta Chorus, Shree Ganapati Atarvashirsha Chorus.
*Ganesh Namavali by Suresh Wadkar.

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The bhajans and devotional Ganesha music are usually available in almost all Indian languages. The compositions and renderings thus indicate the popularity of this God.

A music CD with devotional Ganesha songs in the south Indian language- Telugu.

**Ganesha Aarti**

An important activity that takes place during the Ganesha Chaturthi in India is the aarti. This consists of waving a holy flame in front of the idol of Lord Ganesha and singing bhajans (devotional songs) in praise of him. The aartis are usually held morning and evening during the ten-day-long annual Ganesha festival or Ganeshotsav. An example of one such bhajan Jai Ganesh, Jai Ganesh is given below.

Ganesha Aarti --Jai Ganesh, Jai Ganesh.
Jai Ganesh, jai Ganesh, jai Ganesh deva
Mata jaki Parvati, pita Mahadeva.

Ek dant dayavant, char bhuja dhari
Mathe par tilak sohe, muse ki savari
Pan chadhe, phul chadhe, aur chadhe meva
Ladduan ka bhog lage, sant kare seva.

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Jai Ganesh, jai Ganesh, jai Ganesh deva,
Mata jaki Parvati, pita Mahadeva...

Andhan ko ankh det, kodhin ko kaya
Banjhan ko putra det, nirdhan ko maya
Surya shaam sharan aye, safal kije seva.

Jai Ganesh, jai Ganesh, jai Ganesh deva,
Mata jaki Parvati, Pita Mahadeva...

**English Translation of the Ganesha Bhajan:**
Glory to you, O Lord Ganesha!
Born of Parvati, daughter of the Himalayas, and the great Shiva.

O Lord of compassion, you have a single tusk, four arms,
A vermilion mark of on your forehead, and ride on a mouse.
People offer you betel leaves, blossoms, fruits
And sweets, while saints and seers worship you.

Glory to you, O Lord Ganesha!
Born of Parvati, daughter of the Himalayas, and the great Shiva.

You bestow vision on the blind, chastened body on the leprous,
Children on the sterile, and wealth on the destitute.
We pray to thee day and night, please bestow success upon us.

Glory to you, O Lord Ganesha!
Born of Parvati, daughter of the Himalayas, and the great Shiva.

A music CD carrying the aarti and bhajans sung in the Siddhi Vinayaka temple in Mumbai, India

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**Ganesha in Carnatic Music**

Like all art forms in Indian culture, Indian classical music is believed to be a divine art form which originated from the Devas and Devis (Hindu Gods and Goddesses).

There are two genres of Indian classical music - Carnatic and Hindustani. Carnatic music has evolved from ancient Hindu traditions and the main emphasis is on vocal music. Carnatic music is mainly sung through compositions. Hindustani music emerged in North India with Persian and Islamic influences.

In both Carnatic and Hindustani genres of music the basic elements of sruti (the relative musical pitch), Swara (the musical sound of a single note), raga (the mode or melodic formula), and tala (the rhythmic cycles) form the foundation of compositions. Carnatic and Hindustani music are usually taught and learnt through compositions but do have stylistic differences.

Carnatic music is very devotional in nature. Carnatic musical performances are usually conducted in large halls where a small group of musicians seated on an elevated stage enthral the audience. The performing group usually consists of a main performer, a melodic accompaniment, a rhythm accompaniment, and a drone.

Carnatic music is usually associated with the four southern states of India - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Also this music was mainly patronized by the kings of Mysore and Travancore in southern India in the 18th through 20th centuries.

Composers of Carnatic music were often inspired by religious devotion and were usually scholars proficient in one or more of the languages Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil, or Telugu.

Purandara Dasa, who is known as the father of Carnatic Music, formulated the system that is commonly used for the teaching of Carnatic music. Apart from him, other composers are Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Syama Sastri, Arunachala Kavi, Annamacharya, Narayana Theertha, Vijaya Dasa, Bhadrachala Ramadas, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Oottukkadu Venkata Kavi, Swathi Thirunal, Gopalakrishna Bharathi, Neelakanta Sivan, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Mysore Vasudevachar, Koteeswara Iyer, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Subramania Bharathiyar and Papanasam Sivan.

Carnatic music itself developed around musical compositions of these phenomenal composers. The compositions of these composers are rendered frequently by musicians of today.

In the present day, Carnatic music is presented by musicians in concerts or recordings, either vocally or through instruments.

A Kriti on Lord Ganesha is mandatory at the beginning of every Carnatic musical concert for its success. A Kriti is a format of a musical composition typical to Carnatic music. This is a longer format of a Carnatic music song. Kritis form the mainstay of any typical Carnatic musical concert.

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**Popular Ganesha Kritis In Carnatic Music**

Amongst the various gods and goddesses that most Carnatic compositions are dedicated to, Lord Ganesha features in many of them. There are hundreds of songs that praise the benevolent Lord. For example, Muthuswamy Diksitar composed 27 Ganesha Kritis. Similarly, there are many Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, and Tamil compositions dedicated to Ganesha.

Every composer has made a contribution, thus there exist many popular compositions on Lord Ganesha from a variety of composers and are frequently performed in Carnatic musical concerts.

Also, there is a composition of every imaginable format and flavour in Carnatic music in praise of Ganesha. A few examples are presented below.

There is a Varnam on Ganesha, "Gananayaka" in the pleasant Ragam Sunadavinodini, composed by Maharajapuram Santanam. (Varnam is a form of song in the Carnatic music repertoire, and is a relatively long piece to render taking from f 30 minutes to up to an hour.)

In fact, music lessons for beginners usually commence with the traditional Pillari Gitam, "Shri Gananata Sindhura Kriti Varna" composed by the Saint Purandaradasa.

Pallavi expositions in the Ragam Hamsadhvani invariably feature lyrics in praise of Ganesha. In Carnatic music "Pallavi" is the thematic line of a song. It is usually one cycle long and repeated twice in order to give the percussionist the idea of the chosen Taalam. ("Tala" in Sanskrit means a "clap". Talam is the pattern that determines the rhythmic structure in a musical composition. Carnatic vocalists demonstrate tala by clapping their palms. Instrumentalists, having their hands engaged on the instruments, use their feet and thighs to tap and mark the beats.)

There are two Ragamalika compositions, "Uccista Ganapathe" (composed by Sundaresha Sharma) and "Vinayaka Vinayaka" (Ghana raga, Pancaka Ragamalika composed by Ganapati Saccidananda).
There is "Satata Gananatha" by Purandaradasa. Muthuswamy Diksitar has written the "Shakti sahita ganapatim" on Ganesha.

Devotees all over sing several popular bhajan songs and Namavalis on Vinayaka or Ganesha. The Tamil saint poetess Auvaiyyar poured out many soulful devotional songs and prayers (Vinayakar Agaval) on Ganesha.

There is even a Mangalam devoted to Ganesha. Papanasham Shivan's"Vighna Vinayaka Murttikku Mangalam", in Madhyamavati is an appropriate Mangala Kriti on Ganesha.

In between these special types of compositions lie hundreds of soul stirring Kritis, songs and bhajans devoted to Ganesha.

Thus the devotional outpourings to Ganesha will continue and bring in a lot of peace, wisdom and contentment to the listener. Music related to Ganesha is an industry in itself!

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

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**Source:**
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-telecast-media

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## Ganesha in Telecast Media

Hinduism is filled with numerous mythological stories. There are the stories of the ten avatars of Vishnu, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad Gita etc. Along with them, there are various stories associated with the many important characters in each of these epics. The Indian culture and history too are teeming with stories on icons like Prahalad, stories on Lord Shiva, Ganesha tales, Panchatantra tales, Jataka tales, stories on Buddha, the Akbar-Birbal stories, the Tenali Ramakrishna tales, and many more.

It was considered necessary to pass on these parables down the generations as these contained a lot of wisdom. These stories actually depicted the valuable teachings of the ancient Hindu sages. The story format made them highly retainable in memory. These stories not only entertained but educated one too.

In ancient times these stories were the curriculum for educating Shishyas or students and were passed on by learned gurus in the gurukuls. In the recent past, they were narrated by grandparents or parents to the young ones to enrich and educate them. Then came the illustrative story books which passed on these tales down the generations. In the present day the vehicle to pass on these beloved stories has been animated films.

**Ganesha in Animated films**

With technological advancements, there are many animated films that have been made for the young in the past decade all over the world. The young audience in India has been exposed to a number of animated fairy tales, films, and cartoons from the Western world for many years. Having observed the lasting impact that these have on young children a number of filmmakers and animators have slowly started tapping the rich culture lore of India. The many Hindu gods and goddesses have made good subjects for the animated exploration. Also there is the belief that the stories and attributes of these gods and goddesses strengthen our spirit and propel us to improve the powers of our body, mind and soul, hence they are popular subject choices.

Since most of these films are targeted at the young audience, these stories too have been about a young Krishna, a young Bheem, a young Ghatodgacha or a young Ganesha. These films carry a twofold purpose –they educate the young child in the ways of Hindu mythologies and stories, and also provide entertainment to the target audience which anyway is extremely fond of watching animated films! Hence such explorations are becoming hugely popular.

Ganesha has been a very popular subject in the area of television serials and animated films. But in most of them, Ganesha has been portrayed as a child so that the target audience can identify very well with the adorable character.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-telecast-media**

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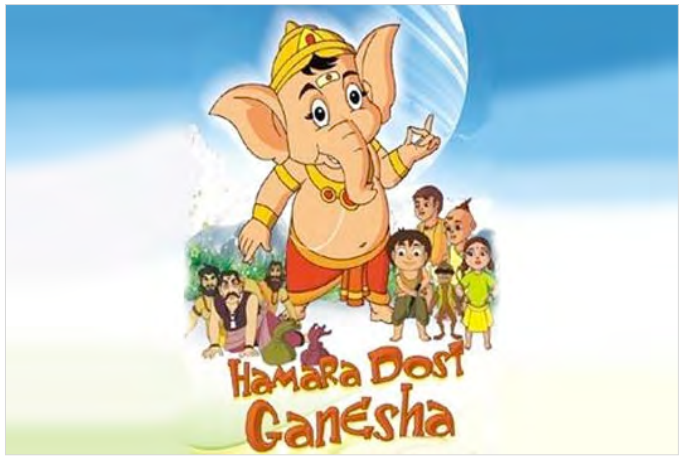
The mythology of Ganesha, the story of Ganesha being the scribe of Sage Vyasa, the important story behind Ganesha's elephant head, stories of his valour as a child, his fondness of sweets, his witty and wise nature, his adventures with the modern day gadgets and children have been some of the topics of the many animated series and films created with him as the central character.

These animation films indicate the love and reverence people have towards Ganesha and how they have succeeded in integrating him into their way of life and making it possible for a traditional Ganesha to be modern and cool at the same time! This is truly a wonderful example of the evolution of religious Ganesha culture into a popularistic culture.

A few examples of this genre of animation films with Ganesha as the central hero are presented below:

*Hamara Dost Ganesha




(Image source)
This is an animated movie in the Hindi language about the adventures of Ganesha and his band of his kiddie friends. This was aired on the Cartoon Network channel of India.

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*** Bal Ganesh**

(Image source)
Bal Ganesh is a 3D animated musical feature film by Shemaroo Entertainment's Animation division directed by Mr. Pankaj Sharma. The film is about the adventures of Lord Ganesh, the Hindu elephant-headed god as a child. The film is about 100 minutes long and has 6 to7 lilting songs by eminent Indian singers like Asha Bhosale, Usha Mangeshkar, Hariharan, Shankar Mahadevan and Kailash Kher.

This film has the distinction of being the first Indian animated film to be promoted at the international Cannes Film Festival.

The premise of the film is about the fact that the elephant God, adored and loved by millions worldwide, was once a little child. As an endearing, intelligent child, he had his own set of adventures in which he had a lot of fun. The movie presents Ganesha as a naughty prankster whose childhood antics are spiced with foot-tapping music, delicious Modaks and a naughty Mooshak (mouse). The narrative is endearing to the target audience.

*** "My Friend Ganesha" series**
My friend Ganesha was made in the year 2007 in the Indian language Hindi.
The story revolves around a family of 4 members which includes the parents, an eight-year old boy and their maid. The parents are busy with their lives and that leaves the boy lonely. He has only the maid for company. One rainy day he rescues a mouse from drowning and brings it home. The maid is a devotee of Ganesha and tells him that he had saved Ganesha's pet and goes on to extol about Ganesha. She also tells him that Ganesha is a friend on whom everyone can count. This propels the boy to deeply believe so. At this time to sort out a crisis that the family is going through, the maid convinces everyone in the family to bring in a Ganesha idol to celebrate "Ganesha Chaturthi" at their home and receive Lord Ganesha's blessings. The boy is excited and a young Ganesha does come to him as a friend. Together in the 11 days of the Ganesha Chaturthi, they both have many adventures and a lot of fun too. Ganesha also helps him solve the family crisis. In the end, everyone in the family turns out to be devout Ganesha followers believing that god is always there to help.

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This is a film where real actors have interacted with animated characters including a young Ganesha, which is why it is even more exciting for the target audience. The movie strikes a chord and also entertains, which was the original purpose of such a plot and choice of characters.

The popularity and success of this subject have led to the creation of a second and third instalment of films –"My Friend Ganesha 2", and "My Friend Ganesha 3". These films have songs too as is the norm of most Bollywood films. The song "O My Friend Ganesha" from this film is quite popular with the young audience.

Thus the imagination of the filmmaker has created a young Ganesha who is fun along with being an effective god. Apart from just the popularity of these Ganesha animation films there are dedicated blogs on the various social networking sites on the internet, fan following and also there are numerous sites that provide Ganesha wallpapers, ring tones etc. This trend clearly indicates that the current generation believes in the concept of Ganesha but is interpreting Ganesha in media and forms that are familiar to them. Thus the spirit of Ganesha is only growing and encompassing one and all!

My Friend Ganesha- the movie CD cover (Image source)

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"My Friend Ganesha 2 -Movie" (Image source)

"My friend Ganesha 3" desktop wallpaper (Image source)

**Ganesha in the entertainment industry**
The presence of Ganesha can be clearly felt in the entertainment industry of India!

There are a number of films in Hindi and some South Indian languages in which there are instances where the actors are shown praying to Ganesha either to fulfil their wishes or to thank him for the boons received.

The Ganeshotsav or the 10 days of Ganesha Chaturthi celebrations too have been seen to play key roles in a few Bollywood films. There are songs choreographed around this event in the films. For example the song "Deva Shree Ganesha" in the 2012 version of the Hindi film "Agneepath".

***"Ganesha Mahime" ***
Ganesha Mahime – a Kannada (the language of the state of Karnataka in south India) feature film on Ganesha.

(Image source)

This was directed by Mr. Mani Murugan, and was made in the year 1981, by Mamatha Movies.

Apart from exploring the benevolence of this beloved God in the film, there are many songs praising Ganesha in the movie like "Ganesha Ninna Mahime Apaara", "Jaya Ganesha Jaya Ganesha", "Paarvathi Deviya Mai Bevarininda", which make it a classic and must watch film for Ganesha devotees and followers.

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*** "Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev"**

"Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev" is a mythological drama series based on the legends of the Hindu god Shiva, also known as Mahadev. This is being aired on the Indian television channel Life OK. The show narrates the most famous of Shiva's legends, sourced from the Puranas and the works of the well-known mythologist Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik, in an episodic fashion. Since Ganesha is Shiva's son, there are many episodes which carry the stories of Ganesha too.

The roles are portrayed by real actors and this drama series has become very popular and has a huge fan following. This is also an example of entertainment that educates too!

Life OK Devon Ke Dev Mahadev Ganesha (Sadhil Kapoor) Photos (Image source)

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## Ganesha Festival

Ganeshotsav

Festival Idols

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## Ganeshotsav

Ganesha Chaturthi is one of the foremost festivals that celebrate Ganesha year after year in India. The communal festival lasts for ten days and ends with the Ganesha Visarjan where the Lord is bid farewell by immersing his idols in water. This festival has lent itself to the development of a new culture- Ganesha culture! There are many agencies that are involved in the preparation of this festival and also the participation levels are huge both in terms of personal worship as well as a communal worship.

Started by freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1894 with a small idol, the festival today has transformed into a major social festival and tourist attraction centred around the community worship of Ganesha, the lovable, pot-bellied, four-armed god who is said to remove all obstacles from people's path and bring them luck.

Popularised by Lokmanya Tilak, Ganesha Chaturthi got reinvented from a festival celebrated in the privacy of one's home to a "Sarvajanik Utsav" – a communal festival. Tilak's noble intention was to utilize the deity's acceptance by all ethnic communities and unite people against the colonial oppressors- the British Raj in those times. Ever since there's been no looking back and the festival has grown in scale and Ganesha has outgrown his primary, religious avatar and has become an omnipresent cultural icon.

Over the years one has seen the rise in innumerable Ganesha Mandals that organize massive public celebrations for ten days. They compete fiercely to introduce variety and a sense of the contemporary into their displays and the Ganesha statues installed. Usually, alongside the traditionally decorated idol, it's not unusual to find themes selected from currently popular or significant happenings in our country. He could be seated on a throne or a mouse - his mount. He could be standing, with two hands, or four could be flanked with lions or whatever fanciful way in which the idol makers want to depict him. Thus artistic exploration plays a large role along with the traditional festivities.

This festival is a platform which transforms Ganesha from his traditional base in religion and mythology into a supremely adaptable, evolving deity. Ganesha thus connects equally with his devotees at both the personal and community levels at all times.

**When is Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated?**
It is celebrated on the fourth day after the new moon in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada. This can occur anytime between late August and early September, depending on the cycle of the moon. It is celebrated for 10 days, with the biggest spectacle taking place on the last day called Ananta Chaturdasi.

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**Where is Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated?**
Though the festival is very popular in the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, one of the best places to experience the festival is in the city of Mumbai. Celebrations take place in many homes, temples, and mandals. In Siddhivinayak temple, dedicated to Lord Ganesha, located in the central suburb of Prabhadevi in Mumbai, an incalculable number of devotees visit the temple to pray and pay their respects to God during the festival. In addition, around 10,000 statues of Lord Ganesha are displayed at various Mandals in various locations in the city.

**What rituals are performed during Ganesh Chaturthi?**
Once an idol of Ganesha is installed, a ceremony is undertaken to invoke his holy presence. This ritual is called the Pranapratishhtha Puja, during which a number of mantras are recited. Following this, special worship is performed. Offerings of Modaks, sweets, flowers, rice, coconut, and jaggery are made to God. The idol is also anointed with red Chandan powder. Prayers are offered to Lord Ganesha every day during the festival. Aarti is performed every day in the morning and evening amidst the chanting and singing of Bhajans. Temples devoted to Lord Ganesha also organize special events and prayers. Those who have a Ganesha idol in their house treat and care for him as a much-loved guest.

**How is Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated?**
The festival begins with the installation of a Ganesha idol in homes and Mandals which have been specially constructed and beautifully decorated. This is the result of months of effort put in by various artisans. After the pujas and celebrations for the 10 days, on the last day - Ananta Chaturdasi, the idols are taken in a procession through the streets, accompanied by singing, dancing, loud music and fervour only to be immersed in the ocean or other water bodies. The festival is celebrated in a very public manner. Local communities compete with each other to put up the biggest and best Ganesha idol and display it. In Mumbai alone, more than 150,000 statues are immersed each year!

**Why are the Ganesh idols immersed in water at the end of the festival?**
Hindus worship idols of their gods because it gives them a visible form to pray to. Ganesha idols made during the festival are made of clay or plaster of Paris, materials that can disintegrate in water, and are temporary. This indicates that the deity is created for some time, exists for some time, and is destroyed eventually, only to return the next time it is time to worship him. This practice draws attention to the cyclical nature of life. Form eventually gives way to formlessness. Nothing is static in this universe. Everything changes, seasons come and go, the moon waxes and wanes, and fortunes and the quality of relationships undergo a change. Ganesha worship draws attention to this ever-changing ever repeating nature of life. However, the energy still remains. The festival ends with the immersion of the idols in the ocean, or other bodies of water, and their subsequent destruction each year serves as a reminder of this belief.

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**Ganesh Chaturthi at home**

Though Ganeshotsav has gained immense popularity as a community festival, it is also a very popular and important festival that is celebrated at home by many families across Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

It is a family tradition to celebrate the Ganesha festival year after year in many homes. Many believe that they and their families, homes, occupations, and businesses get blessed if they bring home a Ganesha idol and perform the puja. Thus the families look forward to it, by planning the type of idol to buy, the theme for the decorations that surround the idol, the celebrations etc.

The Giani family in Mumbai too hold this belief strongly in their heart and they celebrate Ganesha Chaturthi with a lot of devotion. They have been celebrating this festival since 1990 in their home and have kept it up till date. They usually keep the Ganesha idol for one and a half days in their home.

They plan months in advance to decide on a theme for each year's Ganesha idol and the decorations that go with it. The whole family participates, from placing the order for a particular type of idol, to purchasing, creating decorations and executing the theme in the best possible way in their drawing room. Sometimes even close friends and neighbours participate in this process.

The themes that they have chosen usually depend on the type and size of the Ganesha idol that they have ordered. The Ganesha idol is usually placed on a large table against a large wall in their drawing room. The wall behind the idol is where the theme-based decorations are created like a large backdrop. The table too gets covered according to the theme. They have created fabric fans in the background, created mirror work on the wall similar to that found in Kutchi villages, used terracotta elephants with decorated terracotta pots on both sides of the Idol, created gold-coloured trees on the background wall, created a large gold frame on the wall, created huge peacock feather designs using coloured stones and seqiuns, created colourful backdrops using flowers by professional florists, used peacock feathers to create an interesting backdrop amongst the many themes that they have explored over the years. Rich fabrics like satin, gold tissue, silk, in multiple hues and colours have been used to lend a new look each year.

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A backdrop was created (to look like peacock feathers ) for the Ganesha idol before Ganesh Chaturthi.

A backdrop was created on the wall only with colourful flowers and greens for the festive Ganesha idol.

Marigold floral garlands and a large swathe of fabric are used to create a backdrop for the festive Ganesha idol

Along with the special decorations, special lighting arrangements too are also made around the Ganesha idol. Usually, halogen lamps or strings of tiny LED lamps or lamps are placed at strategic points to enhance the theme and create a truly festive atmosphere.

After the "Sthapana" or the installation of the Idol, the main Ganesha puja is performed. Aarthi performed again in the evening, the next morning and before setting out with the Ganesha idol for Visarjan. Prasad in the form of sweets, or fruits is offered to the Lord.

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Many relatives, friends, and neighbours, visit their homes on these one-and-half days and participate in the puja, aartis willingly. They are welcomed with open arms by the Giani family. All the guests are offered either meals, or snacks based on the time of their visits wholeheartedly and a generally festive atmosphere permeates the Giani household during the Ganesh Chaturthi.

The Giani family looks forward to this form of celebration and has many wonderful experiences during these one and half days. It is the firm belief of Mrs. Dhuru Giani that she faces no problems at all in the arrangements that need to be made, the quantity of food that is required, the extra help in terms of servants, and cooks that come in during the Ganesha Chaturthi celebrations. She believes that their faith in performing the Lord Ganesha's puja sincerely ensures the blessings of the Lord in all that they do and to each person in their family and also to each visitor who comes to have darshan. She and many of her friends have had several personal experiences, specially during the Ganesha festival days in their home which make the Giani family believe that the benevolent Lord Ganesha truly protects and helps his devotees always.

Another thing that the Giani family also believes is in the concept of recycling. After the Visarjan most of the decorations in the fabric form are reused, by converting them into personal garments. Other decorations are passed on to friend/s who willingly reuse them in their homes for the following year's Ganesha puja. Thus they ensure that nothing goes to waste despite elaborate decorations.

The principle of recycling is also followed with all the sweets, and fruits that the visitors offer to their Ganesha. These are distributed the very next day to an orphanage close by, so nothing gets wasted.

As part of prasad or a return gift to the visitors/ devotees who come to their home, the Giani family gives a small Ganesha idol, or a Ganesha-related gift article each year.

The Giani family also has a large collection of Ganesha idols in various sizes. These have been collected over many years. Many are gifts as people give them Ganesha idols and Ganesha-related articles as they are aware of their fondness for the Lord. Some have been bought by them. These are displayed in their drawing room on a permanent basis.

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The following images capture a few Ganesha idols from their collection.

Different idols of Ganesha in various shapes, sizes and materials are arranged on a cane shelf.

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Some more Ganesha idols are arranged on a wall mounted vertical wooden shelf.

A view of a large, beautifully crafted golden Ganesha idol placed on a side table in the drawing room along with the Ganesha idol collection on the shelves in the background.

A few close-up views of some of the Ganesha idols from their collection.

Thus the above example of the Ganesha Chaturthi celebrations and collection of Ganesha idols of the Gianni family is a small indication of the vast influence the Lord Ganesha has in people's lives.

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## Festival Idols

**Ganesha idols used during the festival**
As Ganesha Chaturthi approaches every year, people bring in Ganesha idols in various forms to be worshipped at their homes or in the Ganesha Mandals. Some could be sitting Ganeshas, standing Ganeshas, dancing Ganeshas, or even reclining Ganeshas.

In the case of homes, some families may have a tradition of bringing a particular type of idol every year whereas some like to bring in a new form each year. The size of these idols is not very large, as they have to fit into a specially decorated niche/area created inside a room in a home.

At community-level worship, the Ganesha idol sizes really have no restriction, as the wealth status of the Mandal will determine the size. Many Mandals compete to create the tallest or the most popular form of Ganesha.

The ancient tradition of idol-making has seen several transformations over the years. While in the earlier times, the Ganesha idols were made of clay, and decorated with turmeric and other natural colours, slowly the trend has changed to idols made of plaster of Paris and coloured by chemical paints which are not environment friendly.

**Places where Ganesha idols are manufactured**
The sheer variety of Ganesha idols that are displayed in the shops during the Ganesha Chaturthi festival is a feast for the eyes. Ganesha idol-making is an industry in itself. Many places in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat have small and large workshops or Karkhanas that dedicatedly create only Ganesha idols year after year.

Places like Kosapet, Villipuram, Koyambedu, Kavangarai, Thirumullaivoyal in TamilNadu, Penn village close to Mumbai, lanes of Parel, Chinchpokli, and Lalbaug in Mumbai, areas like Chaderghat, Balanagar, Afzalgunj, Uppal, Alwal, Miyapur, Shivarampally in Hyderabad and some other places in Andhra Pradesh are famous for creating Ganesha idols.

Some of these workshops are around 50 years old! Idol-making skills are handed down from generation to generation. Sometimes many migrants from other states also come into this industry and learn their way. Ganesha idol-making is a labour-intensive process. In most places, idol-making gets underway around three months before the Ganesha festival takes place. In some places, they are made all year round to take care of demands in the local as well as international markets. Many places export these idols too.

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The idol-making industry in Pen (it lies on the NH-17 Mumbai to Goa highway) is huge, with most people from the village involved in the process. Around 500 units produce 600,000-700,000 Ganesha idols a year, with a turnover of nearly 6 crore rupees. More than a quarter of the statues are exported. The rest are sold in India, but for a premium as everyone wants an idol made in Pen!

Idol-making in Pen has an interesting history. The villagers have always been artistic. Originally, they were adept at making items such as stuffed parrots and idols out of paper. When the Ganesha festival went from being a private to a community event in the 1890s, some of Pen's artisans shifted their skills to making clay idols for the festival. They were sold locally under a barter system for a few kilos of rice, and there was no money in it. But that is not the case these days, Ganesha idol-making is a profitable business.

Pen also has a Ganesh Idol Museum and Information Centre for tourists to visit and learn more about this unique industry.

In Kosapet, colourfully painted Ganesha idols of varying sizes (three to 13 feet) are created every year. Idols big and small are found everywhere in this locality. One can find hundreds of idols, some covered (with plastic), and some still to be made neatly stacked on the 'Thinnais' of the clay-tiled traditional houses.

More than 450 families are engaged in this trade of producing Ganesha idols for the festival. The people at Kosapet have eked out a living here for more than 50 years. This place was earlier called Koyavanpettai (meaning clay artisan) and with the passage of time, it became Kosapet. People from far-flung areas come here to the Ganesha idols which cost anywhere between Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 25,000.

In Thirumullaivoyal idols of Lord Ganesha are made of Plaster of Paris (PoP) coated with white ash. The raw materials are procured from Andhra Pradesh and that the idols are painted with water colours hence are water soluble and less toxic. Here a five-foot tall idol is sold for Rs. 5,500, whereas the price increases depending on the size and workmanship. The price tag goes up to Rs. 20,000. The price of medium-sized idols of around 10 feet in height ranges from Rs 10 000 to Rs 35 000.

Most of the idol makers have started using Plaster of Paris (PoP) instead of clay here as it is cheaper than clay and is also lighter. The cost of clay has been rising over the years and is not as easily available as PoP. Also with the scarcity of skilled labourers and raw materials, they have been forced to increase the price of idols by at least by 15 per cent recently.

With the increasing usage of PoP and chemical paints the Ganesha idols created in recent times are not environment friendly at all. This is a matter of grave concern as during Ganesha Visarjan these idols pollute the water bodies into which they are immersed. This is not the message that the Ganesha festival stands for. People in their greed to make money than being concerned about age-old safe practices are exploiting this festival in the name of God.

Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-festival/green-influence

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## Green Influence

**Environmental consciousness**
There has been an increasing awareness of eco-friendly practices in all walks of life. When it comes to the Ganesha festival too many people are crusading for the development and usage of such idols. With the usage of such idols, the water bodies get a significantly lesser dose of toxic chemical paints and Plaster of Paris.

The demand for eco-friendly Ganesha idols has been on the increase for the past 4 years, the idol makers say. This definitely is a healthy trend.

The call for such awareness has seen many different practices being followed across the country.

In Mumbai, several potters, sculptors, artists, and idol makers from across the country have been creating awareness amongst the people about eco-friendly Ganesh idols made by using clay and soil from lakes and rivers in the city. This is truly an effort to conserve the environment and promote traditional customs and art forms. It is very essential to change the mindset of people and make them aware and adopt eco-friendly practices.

According to the statistics shared by Ganesha idol dealers in the city, the demand for idols, especially eco-friendly ones, from abroad has been rising every year. Foreign countries are far stricter than India about environmental issues. This could be the reason why more people are demanding eco-friendly idols. The increase in demand is despite the fact that eco-friendly idols are costlier than those made of Plaster of Paris (PoP).

There is a 50 per cent increase in the orders for idols from abroad. Most of the orders were from Australia, Dubai, The Netherlands, the USA and Canada, and Singapore. Since these idols need to be handled with more care and to avoid damage during transit the courier firms are using press-rubber packaging, which is considered better than thermocole or bubble packing.

On average, a medium-sized idol costs anything from Rs 300 to Rs 350. However, the courier charges may vary from Rs 5,000 to Rs 6000, depending upon the country one is sending it to.

**Modern materials and forms for creating eco-friendly Ganeshas**
Impact of the idols made from modern materials: The Ganesha idols used for the puja are immersed in rivers, lakes and the sea. These are mostly made of Plaster of Paris (PoP) which does not dissolve in water easily. Plaster of Paris (POP) is not a naturally occurring material and contains gypsum, sulphur, phosphorus and magnesium. The idols made out of this material take several months to dissolve in water and in the process poison the waters of lakes, ponds, rives and seas.

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The dyes and paints used on these idols release harmful substances like lead, mercury, arsenic and cadmium which increase the acidity and heavy metal content in the water and harm the environment. This also drastically increases the total dissolved solids (TDS) and the acid from the paints could damage the ecosystem. Several accessories used during the Ganesha Puja like thermocole decorations called "maker" , plastic flowers, cloth, incense, camphor and numerous other materials are dumped carelessly adding to the already polluted rivers and lakes.

(Image source)
A video of the immersion process in the location shown above can be viewed at the link below.
(Video source)

In the case of rivers, these undissolved idols could block the natural flow of water, causing stagnation and breeding of mosquitoes. The polluted water also causes several diseases including skin diseases. The pollution from Ganesh Chaturthi idols also damages the ecosystem, kills the aquatic life. In many areas, the same polluted water gets pumped into homes!

To avoid this scenario, some people have started using materials like clay, leaves, papier mache, gram flour, puffed rice, fruits and vegetables to make eco-friendly Ganeshas in their homes during the festival. The adults in the family involve the children in such activities so the children learn about the climatic changes and global warming and the need to stop abusing the environment.

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Some artists have created Ganeshas using unusual materials like buckets, tumblers, brushes and myriad other tools which are used to clean, even a washing machine! They want to use this festival to drive home the message of "cleanliness in general and in politics in particular" through this form of an artistic Ganesha. Since such Ganeshas are created in the spirit of art they are never immersed and are donated to charities or organisations which use them as art exhibits in institutions.

Ganesha idol made out of 10,001 shells. (Image source)

The promotional advertisement for the annual 'Utsav Moorti Samman' is shown below. This is a competition for the best Ganesha idols in the Mumbai area conducted by 'The Times of India' uses a Ganesha image created from junk and carries the message of recycling to avoid pollution- a call for ecological consciousness.

(Image source)

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(Image source)

(Image source)

Some people also believe in alternative solutions. Permanent idols made of stone can be used to perform the Ganesh Chaturthi each year along with a symbolic immersion in a bucket of water at home. These can be reused each year which they feel to a large extent fulfils the requirements of the puja process and at the same time is eco-friendly in nature.

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**Environment friendly idols and practices - Green influence**

**Trends in creating eco-friendly Ganeshas**

Many NGOs that promote environmental awareness and conservation are organising events where people can participate to sculpt Ganesha idols in clay. The need for such events is essential as a lot of people although are interested in greener options, just don't know where to buy them. These organisations also encourage people to use eco-friendly decorations and recycle the puja flowers. Every year after the Ganesha immersion, volunteers of some NGOs collect and compost the flowers adorning the idols.

Over the past few years an effort is being made by residents of IIT Bombay campus and nearby areas in Powai to take the earth from near their homes, sculpt a Ganesha and return it back to earth by immersing it in a nearby water body, thus ensuring the continuation of the tradition while not degrading the environment.

The soil is manually collected from the Powai lake, cleaned of pebbles and kneaded into fine dough, which is then provided to the workshop participants. Organised by the 'Save Powai Lake Team', the project called 'Navsrujan' ( a new beginning) was initiated in 2001. This effort has grown in the past 12 years and many workshops were conducted by this group in IIT, and in many schools around Powai to teach children and people to sculpt clay Ganesha idols. These have been used by many who believe in the concept of an eco-friendly Ganeshotsav. Presently Ms. Chaitali Gupta, is the coordinator of the project, from IIT Bombay campus. She has been conducting these workshops with the assistance of many volunteers who also believe in this effort.

The participants of these workshops make their own eco-friendly Ganeshas and take them home to install them for the puja instead of buying plaster of paris idols that have toxic colours that pollute water bodies and endanger aquatic flora and fauna. The workshop is an ongoing effort to save Powai Lake by IIT campus residents and residents of neighbouring areas.

The participation for this workshop has risen to many hundreds over the years which is definitely a positive indication that saving the environment is as an important agenda as performing the Ganesha puja.

**Workshop (2013):** These workshops were held at the Staff Club, IIT Bombay this year (2013) for three days to accommodate more than 200 participants.

Design Resource

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The majority of the participants were children in the 5-12 age group. A few teenagers and adults too participated. The children were accompanied by parents, hence there is was an interaction between both while making the Ganesha idol.

The workshop charged a nominal fee from the participants and a ball of clay, and a small plastic sheet to work on was provided.

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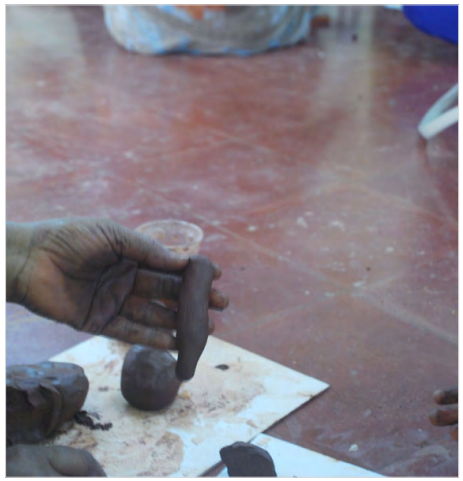
The participants then sat informally in groups on the floor along with a volunteer who explained the idol making process to them. Usually only small Ganesha idols are encouraged to be made in these workshops.

Over the years a simple step-by-step process has been developed by the workhop organisers to create a clay Ganesha that could be followed easily.

Initially the torso, head, legs and hands are built and then the accompaniments like the mouse, Modak , ornamentation and decorations are done.



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Natural colours like yellow (using turmeric) and red (using geru or sindoor) are used to decorate the idol. A white paste created out of natural materials like lime and edible gum was used to create the white coloured decorations on the finished Ganesha idol. This was expertly applied by the volunteers on the finished clay idols to add ornamentation and to highlight some details.

The volunteers of the workshop have been trained in this process so they can help and guide the participants to create the idols easily.

The whole idol creation process was very interactive and informal. There was a lot of chattering, exchange of ideas, and individual exploration too. Knowledge and process transfer took place very naturally and at the end of two hours, a small Ganesha idol emerged from the ball of clay along with huge smiles of satisfaction and clay smeared hands and clothes!

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The organisers felt that children are the best ambassadors of this eco-friendly venture, as they make sure that their parents use only these clay Ganesha idols for the puja and not the store bought ones.

This workshop thus fulfilled the idea of taking from nature and returning to nature, so that there is perfect balance in our surroundings!

The video link presented below shows excerpts of the workshop that was held at the Staff Club at IIT Bombay this year-2013. (Video source)

**Process:** The following video captures the step by step creation of a clay Ganesha at the Navsrujan workshop held at IIT Bombay Staff Club in the year 2013. (Video source)

Ms. Vanamala is the volunteer who demonstrates the creation. She has been trained by Ms. Chaitali Gupta and has been with the Navsrujan workshops for the past 8 years. She has a creative background and has been making clay Diyas for Diwali, and is adept at creating Warli paintings too.

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**Eco-friendly decorations for Ganesha**

The Ganesha idol brought home for the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations is usually installed in a decorated, ornate housing called "makhar" in Mumbai. These were made using thermocole sheets in the past few years. These sheets can be moulded or carved into exquisite decorations. Also these are available in many colourful options too.

A beautiful 'Makhar' made of thermocole pieces assembled together with layers of thermocole cutouts in which the Ganesha idol is seated during the puja.

Though these lend a beautiful ornamental touch to the Ganesha idol, disposing them after the Ganesha Visarjan is a problem. Thermocole being a plastic material is not biodegradable and hence becomes an environmental problem. Environmental experts say that Styrofoam component in thermocole causes disposal problems and advises the masses to switch to eco-friendly decorations. Thermocole lingers in the ecosystem for more than 200 years, spreading toxins in the soil and render it infertile. There is also the fear of thermocole installations catching fire, which then release carcinogenic dioxins that cause hormonal imbalances in people.

Some people realising this have tried to recycle these decorations for another year or two by careful storage. Since thermocole sheets are fragile they cannot last beyond a time and eventually they have to be disposed and then again they pose the same environmental hazard.

So, some creative individuals have tried to use alternate materials like recycled paper, newspaper, rice husk fibres. Newspaper is torn into tiny pieces and soaked overnight. It is later rolled into dough with mixing agents, set into earthen moulds and left to dry in sun. These makhars are finished by hand painting them in eco-friendly colours. Though the percentage of usage of such eco-friendly decorations is marginal compared to the plastic ones, if the local civic bodies bring in bans and also if citizens adopt better environment friendly practices then a change can definitely be possible for the better.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/ganesha-festival/immersion-practices

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## Immersion Practices

**Modern Ganesha idol immersion practices**

**Immersion practices in Mumbai:** Though the Ganesha festival ends with immersion after ten days in most public communities, in many households, Ganesha immersion or Visarjan is done after 1 and half days, 3 days, 5days, 7days or the 10th days per their convenience or family tradition.

Many people choose the least crowded day to immerse the Ganesha idol.

Those who opt for an eco-friendly Ganesha immersion, do it in a bucket or a tank. In Mumbai, artificial lakes are created to assist in the immersion procedure and also avoid water pollution.

The image below shows one such bucket immersion of a Ganesha idol.

(Image source)

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**Community Assistance**

Since in Mumbai, Ganesha Chaturthi is a community festival the assistance of many local and Government agencies is required to oversee the smooth functioning of the festival as well as minimum disruptions to everyday life on those ten days. A few examples of such assistance are presented below: The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) has tried to assist in the Ganesha Visarjan process by introducing a mechanised system which is a novel concept for large idol immersions.

Brihan Mumbai Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav Samanvaya Samiti (BSGSS) is a committee in Mumbai that oversees the functioning of the Ganesha Chaturthi festival in the different mandals every year An example of their responsibilities can be seen from the data of the festival in 2012. In this year BSGSS had under its umbrella over 10,500 public Ganeshotsav associations and 175,000 household Ganesh idols in the city. Based on prior experiences over the years this committee introduces practices or changes to make the festival a safe and incident free experience.

In the year 2012 they decided to limit the height of the tallest idols to be used in the Ganesha Chaturthi festivities to just 15 feet as against people making idols around 25-30 feet in the years earlier. There were several reasons behind this obsession for constructing tall Ganesha idols. Large idols attract devotees, sponsors, celebrities and media. They observed that in the past 10 years this increased height led to accidents and claimed lives of devotees. The advantages of using smaller idols were the cost of the idol and other associated costs of decorations hiring of security personnel to guard the idol during the 10 days would reduce; handling of the idol through the narrow roads of Mumbai to reach the crowded beaches on the day of immersion would be easier and safer. Usually these processions create traffic snarls and stop suburban trains for hours. These processions also take long detours to avoid the flyovers dotting the city.

Temporary police lookout posts created at beaches during Ganesha immersion days.

(Image source)

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The problems continue even after the immersion, with many of the gigantic idols not getting dissolved in the seawater and washing ashore the next day, littering the beaches, creating environmental hazards and embarrassing the devotees.

They also advise the mandals to ensure that maximum immersion be done during the low tide, as per the central pollution control board guidelines to protect the environment.

They also request the Mandals to play traditional musical instruments instead of having DJs in a bid to control noise pollution and see that the 45-decibel limit is not crossed.

They appeal to the mandals to install CCTV cameras on vehicles carrying Ganesha idols to capture footage of the immersion procession.

**Conclusion**

With the immersion of the Ganesha idols, the 10-days-long Ganesh Chaturthi comes to an end. It's a bitter-sweet feeling for the devotees, as they wait the whole year in anticipation for this, plan and work very hard to see that everything goes well and smoothly till the end.

Many feel it is the Lord Ganesha's blessings and guidance, which ensure that all things go well.

The devotees in Maharashtra shout " Ganapati bappa moriya, pudhchya varshi loukar ya" (which means- "Oh Ganesha, come soon next year" ) while bidding goodbye during the immersion of the dear Lord. This is a reassurance to themselves, that though goodbye is being bid presently, everyone looks forward to the Lord Ganesha returning the next year to take part once again in the festivities.

Design Resource

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/video

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## Video

Ganesha Making

Eco Ganesha

Design Resource

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Design Resource

# Ganesha

The Elephant Headed Deva (God)

by
Madhuri Menon
IDC, IIT Bombay

**Source:**
**https://dsource.in/resource/ganesha/further-links**

1. Introduction
2. Ganesha - Reverence
3. Ganesha Symbology
4. Aesthetic Exploration (2D)
5. Aesthetic Exploration (3D) Part 1
6. Aesthetic Exploration (3D) Part 2
7. Ganesha Invocation
8. Presence of Ganesha
9. Ganesha in Art
10. Ganesha in Sculpture
11. Ganesha in Literature
12, 13, 14
15. Video
16. Further Links
17. Acknowledgements
18. Contact Details

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15. http://mylordganesha.com

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## Contact Details

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